

IBS

VOLUME 10

OCTOBER

1988

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# IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

Volume 10

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Subscriptions:

Individuals £6.50 sterling or 7.50 Irish pounds  
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AYS IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR JACOB WEINGREEN ON THE  
SION OF HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY. VOL II

Edited by D.R.G. Beattie  
E.A. Russell

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## THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF LEVITES IN JUDAH.

Nigel Allan

Many, including myself, owe their career to the enthusiasm Professor Weingreen imparted to all his students and to the enormous interest he took in them not only while directly under his instruction but in the careers he so ably prepared them for. It is a great privilege to make a small contribution in honour of his eightieth birthday and to wish him and Mrs Weingreen many more years of health and happiness.

The settlement of Levites in Judah is of great significance for understanding both the early propagation of the YHWH religion and directly connected with this, the emergence of Judah into a position of prominence in pre-exilic Israel. This association between the tribe of Levi with respect to its special relationship to YHWH and the tribe of Judah is witnessed by a number of traditions in the Old Testament.

Of particular interest to the study of the early domicile of Levites is the levitical genealogy found in Nu.26:58 a. This genealogy is quite different in content and style from the larger genealogy in which it is contained and unique among levitical genealogies. In place of the usual enumeration of Gershon, Kohath and Merari as the sons of Levi, the offspring of Levi are stated to be the families of the Libnites, the Hebronites, the Mahlites, the Mushites and the Korahites. Instead of the use of personal names as in other genealogies, the gentilic form is used here. The genealogy is clearly an intrusion which enumerates the children of Levi differently from those already recorded in the previous verses.<sup>1</sup> The genealogy in v.57 is resumed in the same style at the end of v.58 with the words "and Kohath begat Amram", so providing the complete genealogy interrupted in the foregoing part of v.58<sup>2</sup>.

There is little foundation on which to establish the correct chronological application for the origin of the Gershon, Kohath, Merari genealogy, except that in these names there lies an authentic memory of persons rather than references to places or names of families. As these three eponymous ancestors of levitical families remain constant although changing their respective positions from time to time, the totally divergent tradition in v.58 a stands therefore as the sole surviving memory of some ancient levitical communities which in time lost their significance.

The names Mushi and Mahli afford little assistance in the search for an origin for this list but the name Korah<sup>3</sup> indicates a pre-exilic date if the grace of Korah related in Nu.16 is attributed to a post-exilic struggle with the Jerusalem hierarchy<sup>4</sup> and considered responsible for the subservient position of Korah found recorded by the Chronicler.<sup>5</sup> This is supported by the

that Libnah and Hebron both achieved the height of their importance in the pre-exilic period.<sup>6</sup> It is from the second of these two settlements that the most secure basis for the investigation of this levitical arrangement is to be sought. The earliest date must be subsequent to Israel's settlement in Canaan and allow sufficient time for a levitical family to develop in each of these places important enough to ensure the survival of their record. Libnah attained the height of its fortune in the later monarchic period when it was sufficiently strong to revolt against Judah (2 Kgs.8:22), and its leading families were regarded prestigious enough to intermarry with some of the later kings of Judah.<sup>7</sup> Although this dating suits the foremost position of Libnah, it seems unlikely that Hebron, by that time an unimportant garrison town in a system of fortresses and therefore of little significance, should have contained an important levitical community the record of whose existence has survived. Hebron experienced the climax of its historical career during the reign of David. Subsequent to the reigns of David and Solomon it became part of the system of fortresses built by Rehoboam without any undue celebrity (cf. 2 Chr.11:10) and ultimately fell to the Edomites during the Exile. If the date of the list's formulation is placed in the reign of David, when Hebron as royal capital of Judah was enjoying the zenith of its long and illustrious career which had begun in patriarchal times, it is most probable that the Levites of Hebron would have insisted on their ascendancy over the other groups. It therefore follows that the period of Israel's settlement in Canaan prior to the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy is the period most appropriate for the formulation of these levitical groups when Libnah may have enjoyed sufficient prominence to claim a predominant position over the Hebron group still on the steady ascent to eminence, and other levitical groups in the vicinity.<sup>8</sup>

Of the five levitical settlements mentioned in this early list, three for which some locality can be ascertained belong to the southern regions of Judah. The southern origin of Korah is supported by the fact that Korah was one of the sons of Esau born to him in Canaan (Gen.36:5,14) and even more strongly by 1 Chr.2:43 where he is recorded as the son of Hebron. When the Israelites settled in Libnah, which was originally a Canaanite town, its inhabitants would have been incorporated into the YHWH community. As Levites were the followers of Moses *par excellence* and preservers of the pure mosaic tradition of Israel's faith which made them distinct from their fellow tribesmen in their dedication to YHWH,<sup>9</sup> they would have been regarded as an important element in the integration of a Canaanite city into Israel. Their role at Hebron may have been of double significance when it is remembered that the Calebites who had settled there were not part of the group that came out of Egypt, but represented one of the elements that became subsequently attached to Israel in the wilderness. It is doubtful if they were YHWH worshippers before joining up with Israel during the period of wandering in the wilderness, and on account of the recentness



of their conversion to Israel's God (which may have been only nominal) it is very likely that on their settlement in the Canaanite city of Hebron they would either be influenced by the religion indigenous to the place or revert to their original faith. The Levites had to maintain the YHWH influence amongst the Calebites and at the same time propagate their religion among the native population. The association of the Levites with Judah rather than Caleb indicates acknowledgement of the alien nature of Caleb and implies that Judah was the strongest of the Israelite elements that had entered the promised land as part of the Calebite advance from the south.<sup>10</sup> The concurrence of the traditions propagated by these Levites and those which circulated among the southern tribes but especially in Judah the strongest of them, must have been an important factor in the subsequent emergence of Judah to a position of pre-eminence over all the tribes of Israel. It could be possible, although no definite conclusion may be reached, that Levites in these settlements functioned at a communal shrine sited at Hebron where besides Judah and Caleb, Simeon, Othniel, Jerahmeel and the Kenizzites gathered to worship.<sup>11</sup> However, it is evident from the meagre information available that Levites existed as a group in Judaea and Calebite towns and being an entity distinct from the tribes in whose midst they lived, do not appear to have shared in the tribal allotment of land.

Moving to the final chapters of the book of Judges, we meet two different Levites. First, in Ju.17 and 18 the career of Micah's Levite is described and the origin of the sanctuary and priesthood of Dan explained. We are told in this ancient narrative<sup>12</sup> that a Levite, who came from Bethlehem in Judah, on arrival at the shrine built by Micah with silver stolen from his mother, was immediately offered the position of priest. The Levite accepted Micah's offer and received ten shekels a year, food and clothes, following which he was installed by Micah as chaplain to his household.<sup>13</sup> The reference to the Levite in v.18 as a father as well as a priest<sup>14</sup> may indicate that he had some administrative or counselling function in Micah's household and it is quite evident that the distinctive relationship of the Levite with YHWH was well known since immediately following his arrival Micah set aside his son whom he had appointed priest of his shrine and placed the Levite in charge in his stead. The comment of Micah that the service of the Levite at his shrine insured the special blessing of YHWH (17:13) suggests that the Levite, although perhaps infrequently mentioned, was nevertheless highly esteemed. The second of the supplementary narratives to the book of Judges relates to a tribal conflict with Benjamin occasioned by the violation of a Levite's concubine. Unlike Micah's Levite we are given no background information regarding this Levite except that he sojourned on the side of Mt. Ephraim (19:1). However, he did have a link with Judah, albeit a tenuous one, in that his concubine came from Bethlehem in Judah, the home of Micah's Levite, and it was there he went to fetch her back from her father's house. It may be possible that this Levite originally came from the vicinity



Bethlehem where he had first met his concubine and following from this, to postulate a settlement of Levites in or around Bethlehem. It therefore appears that during this early period of settlement we have evidence of a scattering of levitical settlements in Judah and an affinity between the two. As Levites had no tribal inheritance of land, they were free to move from their original domiciles in the south or wherever else they may have been to seek a living where it could be found and propagate their faith in YHWH whom they served.

We now turn to the lists of levitical cities recorded in Jos.21 and 1 Chr.6:39-66 (E.V.6:54-81).<sup>15</sup> The priestly writer records in Jos.21 how forty-eight cities including six cities of refuge were assigned to the Levites in all the territory conquered by the Israelites on both sides of the Jordan. Additionally, the Levites also received pasture lands around each city's perimeter<sup>16</sup> in which they were to raise their livestock (Nu.35:3). They could not sell them as they were their eternal possession among the children of Israel (cf. Lev.25:33f.). However, the fact that in the case of Hebron the village and arable land remained the property of Caleb (cf. Jos.21:11f.) shows that no land fit for agriculture was assigned to the Levites and in this way the principle was upheld which denied the Levites an inheritance of land among the tribes of Israel. The cities of refuge that are included among the levitical cities, being equally distributed throughout Palestine, provided areas of asylum where refuge could be sought in the event of unpremeditated homicide (Dt.4:41-43; 19:1-13). The selection of these cities of refuge must have originally been occasioned by their reputation as sites of important shrines which had become popular as asylums for the fugitive and were accordingly selected as places suitable for levitical settlements.

Because Jos.21.1,2 relate how the Levites requested cities from Joshua and Eleazar, these lists were traditionally taken to derive from the period of Israel's conquest of Canaan.<sup>17</sup> However, as the area which they covered bears no relevance to this period of Israel's history when she had scarcely gained a footing in the land, this dating cannot be upheld.<sup>18</sup> The most feasible assessment of the situation has been advanced by Benjamin Mazar<sup>19</sup>, who points to the closing years of David's reign or the early years of Solomon's administration when Israel's power was at its climax and all the places mentioned in the lists fell within her borders, as the period from which it is most likely the lists of levitical cities derive.<sup>20</sup> In support of this dating Mazar cites 1 Chr.26:30-32 which relates how, in the fortieth year of David's reign i.e. the last year of his life, certain members of the important levitical family Hebron were commissioned with religious and secular duties in the state especially in the area west of the Jordan and in the areas occupied by the Reubenites, Gadites, and half of the Manasseh tribe. Jerijah, which was evidently the foremost branch of the Hebronites, was sought out in Jazer of Gilead and found to include men capable of discharging state business in these regions.

From this information it becomes clear that David inaugurated a typical civil service staffed by Levites, which was continued and developed by his successor.<sup>21</sup> As we have seen in the case of Hebron and Libnah some cities already have had levitical settlements in them,<sup>22</sup> while others became centres of levitical activity in accordance with royal policy. Jokmeam, included in the Ephraimite group of levitical cities, is connected with the family of Jekam, a descendant of the levitical family of Hebron (cf. 1 Chr. 23:19; 24:23), which may indicate the antiquity of this settlement and its southern provenance. From the mode of arrangement of levitical cities the religious value of Levites as sionaries of YHWH was fully appreciated by David and Solomon and skillfully used by them in the spiritual affairs of the kingdom where the loyalty of the people could not be depended upon.<sup>23</sup>

The lists are composed of groups of towns, each group separate from the rest. There is no geographical continuity between them yet they all lie within the bounds of Israelite territory. Hence a parallel may be drawn between the area in which the levitical cities are found and the territory of the kingdom of Israel as defined in the description of Israel's borders in David's census (1 Sam. 24). It is possible that Levites were settled in the cities around Jerusalem for the purpose of protecting the capital from a rising of the family of Simeon or Benjamin or an insurrection of the northern tribes.<sup>24</sup> The absence of Jerusalem itself from the lists can be accounted for by the fact that it was the religious and political centre of the nation and the seat of government. There is accordingly no mention of priestly land in connection with Jerusalem, but it is possible that the pasturage around the levitical settlements in Benjamin was used for the maintenance of the Jerusalem priesthood throughout the year. More plausibly it would appear reasonable to assume that these towns provided a residence for the overspill of the Jerusalem clergy, and as the royal cult developed, priests who had discharged their course of priestly office at Jerusalem may have retired to one of these cities until their next turn of duty came up. Thus, these settlements would have come directly under the control of the Jerusalem priesthood and may have stood in the same relationship to Jerusalem as medieval parishes stood to their cathedral. As late as the return from exile fortified camps of Levites are found mentioned in the region of Geba and Azmaveth (Neh. 12:29). The levitical presence in a number of cities east of the Jordan doubtless exercised a consolidating influence in an area where Israelite settlements were thinly scattered among Moabites, Ammonites and the people of Bashan.<sup>25</sup> Levitical settlements are also found in the extreme south among the Calebites, Kenizzites and Jerahmeelites,<sup>26</sup> and among the alien Canaanite cities further north.<sup>27</sup>

The ruling family having a natural affinity with Judah, the loyalty of the area was never in question, hence we have no levitical settlements in central Judah their purpose being superfluous there. Similar to Judah there was generally speaking, an absence of Canaanite elements in the central region of Palestine.



and no mention of levitical cities is found in this area either with the exception of Shechem, where the presence of Levites could have been a deliberate safeguard to Davidic interests at this ancient shrine which had in earlier times close associations with the Joseph tribes and may have been regarded as a potential rival to Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup> Further north lay frontier areas, and regions of mixed and doubtful allegiance where a number of cities contained levitical elements probably with the purpose of maintaining the loyalty of the local populace so far removed from the seat of government to the royal house at Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>

In view of the close association of Levites with the tribe of Judah a strong sense of loyalty would have existed between levitical elements scattered throughout Israel and the ruling Judaeon family. As we have seen from the closing chapters of the Book of Judges Bethlehem appears to have contained an early settlement of Levites.<sup>30</sup> It is therefore not without significance that David and his family came from Bethlehem (2 Sam.16:1). It follows that, as an influential element steeped in the mosaic tradition which they shared with Judah, David and his son should have found it expedient to extend the influence of the Levites by advancing their position in the state.<sup>31</sup> The levitical families connected with Hebron may have been the first to be sought out for promotion. It was probably not only due to the elders whose friendship David had cultivated (cf. I Sam.30:26-31) but also to levitical co-operation that he was able to set up his residence in Hebron as king of the whole of Judah, and to use it as a jumping off ground for his future ambitious designs. They must have witnessed and perhaps even officiated at his coronation, and would doubtless have watched his career with keen interest, as the progress of their missionary activities in the name of his god, YHWH, would in no small measure have been dependent on the ultimate success of his plans.

The connection of Levites with Judah is further witnessed by the experience of the Levites in the northern kingdom following its separation from Judah. Under Jeroboam's regime Levites in the northern kingdom became redundant, unable to discharge their priestly office, act as civil servants or spread Judaeon propaganda (I Kgs.12:31). It seems that they were not actually displaced by Jeroboam from their sanctuaries but their importance was eclipsed by the setting up of non-levitical priests to operate at Bethel and Dan (I Kgs.12:25 ff.).<sup>32</sup> An interesting tradition relating to the fate of these northern Levites occurs in 2 Chr.11:13,14,17. Here it is stated that the Levites throughout Israel reported to Rehoboam in Judah as Jeroboam had denied them their priestly office. They were followed by all the faithful who sought YHWH at his sanctuary in Jerusalem, and made Rehoboam secure for three years.<sup>33</sup> The verb used to denote the rejection of the Levites from their priestly function is *znh* which has the basic meaning "to be foul" or "rancid". It can in most instances be understood to mean something that is abhorrent i.e. foul or stinking.<sup>34</sup> In v.14

of the passage under consideration this verb again occurs in the hiphil form to express Jeroboam's and his son's rejection of the Levites from the priesthood. The correct interpretation appears to be that Jeroboam in making the Levites abhorrent injured their reputation as priests among the people, and the fact that his sons are mentioned suggests that the process of stirring up public opinion against the Levites continued for some time.<sup>35</sup> This would agree with the record of I Kgs.12:31 where there is no evidence of a direct attempt to drive out the Levites, but rather to break their monopoly over the state's religious affairs by setting up priests not of the sons of Levi. It is probable that the Chronicler has preserved a genuine tradition that told of a stream of levitical refugees from the northern kingdom back to Judah that doubtless continued for many years. However, the special position of the levitical tribe in Judah seems to have survived into later years, for during the reign of Jehoshaphat, we find them still engaged in civil administration and in the cultic and legal life of Judaeen cities (cf. 2 Chr. 19:11).

## NOTES

1. In the levitical genealogy recorded in Ex. 6:16-19, the first four families do not appear as gentilics but as persons enumerated along with others as grandsons of Levi. The fifth family, the Korahites, appear in v.21 as Korah, the great grandson of Levi. See A.H.J. Gunneweg, *Leviten und Priester*, Göttingen, 1965, p.170.
2. See K Möhlenbrink, "Die levitschen Überlieferungen des Alten Testaments", *ZAW*, 52, 1934, pp.184-231, especially pp.192ff. Also M. Noth *Numbers*, London, 1968, p.155.
3. K. Möhlenbrink *op.cit.*, thinks that as Mahli and Mushi always occur together, a transcriber of the text accidentally inserted Mahli here since it is absent from the LXX version of the list, and considers the placing of Korah by the LXX in third place as original, its present position at the end of the list in the M.T. being subsequent to the incident in Nu.1 following which the Korahites were doubtless repressed.



4. So A. Kuenen in *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur biblischen Wissenschaft* translated from Dutch by K. Budde, Leipzig, 1894, pp.465ff., who places the struggle of the Levites recounted in the priestly tradition sometime during the fourth century B.C. It is interesting to note however, that even in the very subordinate position occupied by Levites by the first century A.D. they still made good a minor pretension to priestly privilege by obtaining from Agrippa II the right to wear priestly linen. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, XX.8 §6.
5. The Korahites were gatekeepers cf. I Chr.9:19, 26:1,19; bakers of sacrificial meals cf. I Chr.9:31, and singers cf. 2 Chr.20:19, positions hardly appropriate for a group powerful enough to contend for the Aaronic priesthood, and may therefore indicate their demotion from high office following their dissension with the Aaronites.
6. Korah is generally found in the genealogies as the "great grandson" of Levi and "grandson" of Kohath, cf. Nu.16:1. The remaining four in the verse under discussion always appear in the other genealogies as "grandsons" of Levi, but Libni is sometimes referred to as the son of Gershom cf. Nu.3:18; I Chr.6:2 (E.V. v.17), and sometimes as the son of Merari, cf. I Chr.6:14 (E.V.v.29). Mahli and Mushi always appear as the sons of Merari and Hebron as the son of Kohath.
7. Cf 2 Kgs.23:31; 24:18; Jer.52:1.
8. So L. Waterman "Some determining factors in the northward progress of Levi", *JAOS*, 57, 1937, pp.375-380 who also takes into consideration that sufficient time must be allowed for the Mushi group, which he identifies with Moses, to be relegated from its original position of importance to its present position in the list of levitical families recorded in Nu.26:58.
9. Ex.32:25-29 and Dt.33:8-11 record traditions relating to the attachment of Levites to YHWH at the expense of ties of kindred. See N. Allan, "Some levitical traditions considered with reference to the status of Levites in pre-exilic Israel", *Hey. J*, 21, 1980, pp.1-13 and A.H.J. Gunneweg, *op.cit.*, pp.41ff.
10. See M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, Stuttgart, 1948, pp.114 f., and 143 ff. who identifies the narratives in Nu.13 and 14 and 21:1-3 with a tradition peripheral to the wilderness wanderings which relates a Calebite conquest of the Hebron region initiated from Kadesh. See also N.H. Snaith, "Numbers" in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London, 1962, pp.259ff.

11. Caleb is first encountered in Kadesh in Nu.13 and 14 (see previous note) and subsequently represented as inhabiting the locality of Hebron only some sixty miles distant (Jos.14:13ff.; 21:12; Ju.1:20). Kenizzites are associated with Edom in Gen.36:11,15,42; I Chr.1:36,53, but I Chr.4:15 enumerates Kenaz among the sons of Caleb and records him as occupying an area in the Negeb region. See also Ju.1:13ff., and E. Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme*, Halle, 1906, pp.73ff.
12. J. Brewer, "The Composition of Ju.17 and 18", *AJSL*, 29, 1913, pp.261-283, claims the narrative to be a complete unit with few evidences of redaction. C.F. Burney, *Book of Judges*, London, 1918, p.416 considers that the narrative presents a combination of two ancient traditions derived from J and E which were in all essentials strikingly similar. A. Murtonem, "Some Thoughts on Judges xvii sq.," *VT*, 1, 1951, pp.223f., postulates three sources while C.A. Simpson, *Composition of the Book of Judges*, Oxford, 1957, pp.63-70, divides the narrative into J and E plus considerable redactional material. M. Noth, "The Background of Judges 17-18" in B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson eds., *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: essays in honour of J. Muilenberg*, New York, 1962, pp.68-85 interprets Ju.17 and 18 as a polemic by partisans of Jeroboam's cultic innovations at Bethel and Dan (I Kgs.12:25-33). See also A.D.H. Mayes' analysis of Ju.17-21 in *Israel in the period of the Judges*, London, 1974, pp.42-46.
13. G. Ahlström in *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite religion*, Lund, 1963, pp.25-27 points out that for Micah to set up a *bêṭ 'elôhîm* shows him to have been a petty prince or ruler. This seems to agree with his pursuit of a whole tribe which an individual with his household would hardly be capable of.
14. Besides the use of the term 'āb "father" as one of respect given to prophets and priests (2 Kgs.6:21) it is also used of the king's chief minister or vizier cf. Gen.45:8.
15. W.F. Albright in his article "The list of levitic cities" in *Louis Ginzberg's Jubilee Volume*, Vol. I, New York, 1945, pp.49-75 eliminates the divergencies between Ju.21 and I Chr.6 by comparing them with the Greek versions, especially Vaticanus.
16. Nu.35:4 states that the pasturage area was to extend a thousand cubits from the wall, but the following verse defines the area as two thousand cubits without the city, so reducing the city itself to a mere point. Perhaps something of an idealistic nature may be seen in this provision.



17. It has long been thought that the lists were a retrojection of the post-exilic imagination into earlier times. J. Wellhausen in his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, translated by J.S. Black and A. Menzies, Edinburgh, 1885, pp.162ff. was one of the pioneers of this hypothesis.
18. A. Alt, "Bemerkungen zu einem judäischen Ortslisten des Alten Testament", *Kleine Schriften*, 1953, pp.289-305, considers that the list refers to an evacuation of the Levites to Jerusalem and the replacement of their cities with armed fortresses. He explains the discrepancy between the statements of 2 Kgs. 23 and the absence of Judaeon towns in the list by the theory that the reform came to a stop before it was accomplished.
19. B. Mazar, "The Cities of Priests and Levites", *VTS*, 7, 1960, pp.193-205.
20. On the archaeological evidence see G.W. Ahlström, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine*, Leiden, 1982, p.38 who also points to this dating.
21. J. Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology I; The Encroacher and the Levite, the Term 'Aboda*, Berkeley, 1970, pp.84ff. discusses the military nature of the Levites as witnessed by terms such as *pēkudat* used here which can mean armed guard. Cf. Ezek.9:1 and 2 Kgs.11:18.
22. Cf. W.F. Albright, *op.cit.*, especially pp. 58f. J. Gray, *Joshua Judges and Ruth, The Century Bible*, new ed., London, 1967, p.29 suggests that the intensive settlement of Levites in Hebron and the Kenizzite district to the south and east of Hebron (Ju.21:11,13,14) may represent measures taken by David after the suppression of Absalom's revolt which had been organised from Hebron (2 Sam.15:10).
23. It is worth mentioning that not all settlements with remains dating from this period appear in the lists of levitical cities. For instance the fortresses of Arad in the Negeb which guarded the way to Edom (2 Kgs. 3:20) connecting Beersheba, Hebron and Jerusalem with Arabah and the Gulf of Aqaba. Archaeological evidence places the building of this fortress in Solomon's reign, see Y. Aharoni, "Arad: its inscriptions and temple", *BA*, 31, 1968, pp.2f. to which Ahlström, *Royal Administration, op.cit.*, pp.40f. tries to give levitical connection from the mention of the Qerosite on an ostraca found there, identifying them with the Nethinim, a class of temple servant found in Ezra 2:44 and Neh.7:47.
24. Which in view of Sheba's revolt (2 Sam.20) and the cursing of Shimei (2 Sam.16: 5-14) was more than a mere possibility.

25. Bezer, Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, Ramoth-Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, Jazer, Golan and Ashtaroth. Cf. Jos.21:27,36-39 and L.H. Grollenberg, *Atlas of the Bible*, London, 1956, pp.59f., 65f., 81f. It is interesting to note that on the Moabite stone it is recorded that Mesha, king of Moab, annexed Jahaz to Dibon (1.20) so indicating the debateable nature of this border territory. See W.H. Bennett, *The Moabite Stone*, Edinburgh, 1911 pp.3f.,36,51.
  
26. Hebron, Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Debir, Juttah and Bethshemesh, cf. Jos.21:13-16 and L.H. Grollenberg, *op.cit.*
  
27. Eltekah, Gibbethon, Gathrimmon, Gezer, Aijalon and Beth-horon, cf. Jos.21:22-25 and L.H. Grollenberg, *op.cit.*
  
28. N. Allan in "Jerusalem and Shechem", *VT*, 24, 1974, pp.353-357 suggests that it was the presence of Levites in Shechem which determined Jeroboam to move his capital to Penuel (I Kgs.12:25).
  
29. Kishon, Dabareh, Engannim, Abdon, Helkath, Rehob, Hammoth, Joknean and Dimnah, cf. Jos.21:28-35 and L.H. Grollenberg, *op.cit.*
  
30. G.W. Ahlström, "Was David a Jebusite subject", *ZAW*, 92, 1980, pp.285-287, contends that David was already familiar with the Jebusite administration when he took over Jerusalem and its priesthood and so explains Zadok's predominance (2 Sam.15:24ff.) as priest of Jerusalem over Abiathar from Nob. This he deduces from the idea that Bethlehem, David's home town, formed part of the Jebusite kingdom of Jerusalem. However, it is highly problematical that David as an alien Jebusite would have been accepted first as Saul's general and then appointed by Samuel as Judah's leader and future king. R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël des origines à l'installation en Canaan*, Paris, 1971, pp.509f., claims that David the Judaeen from Bethlehem in his defeat of a common enemy, the Amalekites, united around him all the surrounding tribes with his own to Judah by the gifts he gave to his friends, and the list which follows enumerates those various groups united under his sceptre (I Sam.30:26-31).
  
31. G.W. Ahlström, *Royal Administration ...*, *op.cit.*, pp.6-9 gives parallel instances in Mesopotamia where the ruler used religion to establish and maintain royal administration.



32. S. Gevirtz in "Simeon and Levi in 'The Blessing of Jacob' ", *HUCA*, 52, 1981, pp.93-128 cogently argues that the curse of Simeon and Levi by Jacob, in Gen.49:5-7 represents a latter-day idealization of a pre-Judaean confederation of Israelite tribes now at the point of its dissolution in the reign of Jeroboam I. Simeon is cursed for its violent support of Judah under David which enabled Judah to become predominant so disrupting the tribal federation of pre-Davidic Israel. Levi's destruction of a bull he sees as their destruction of the cult object at Bethel during the time of the Levites' tenure of office as agents of the Jerusalem government or subsequent to their dismissal by Jeroboam I.
33. The reason for the limitation of three years is due to the invasion of Shishak in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign (cf. I Kgs.14:25; 2 Chr.12:2). This invasion from the Chronicler's point of view must have been caused by some religious delinquency on the part of Rehoboam and his people (cf. 2 Chr.12:1) which brought about a weakening of the kingdom. This naturally falls in the fourth year of the reign immediately preceding the invasion, and hence only three years are left for obedience and increase in strength.
34. i.e. *zānah* 'eglēk šōmērōn "thy calf is abhorrent, Samaria", Hos.8:5. Cf. also Lam.2:7; Ps.44:10 (E.V.v.9), 24 (E.V.v.23); 60:3 (E.V.v.1), 12 (E.V.v.10); 74:1; 77:8 (E.V.v.7); 89:39 (E.V.v.38). In Is.19:6 a hiphil form occurs with the word *nēhārōt* (rivers) which means "the rivers stink" i.e. for lack of water. The form here shows the Aramaic influence and seems to be made up of two readings *hiznīhū* and 'aznīhū, the latter of which imitates the Aramaic (cf. Gesenius's *Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, London, 1859, p.249f.).
35. In 2 Chr.13:9 the verb *ndh* is used to express Jeroboam's action against the Levites. The rendering "dismissed from office" which is adopted in the NEB and which is appropriate to the context implies that the priests of YHWH ceased to be the official state priesthood and others took their place. This accords with the interpretation proposed for 2 Chr.11:14. However, due to the reference "the sons of Aaron" as a priestly caste it is doubtful if this text is contemporary with the events it records as Aaron does not appear as the ancestor of priests until post-exilic times.

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Sociology and the Study of the Old TestamentSome Recent Writing

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In a recent article, Herion<sup>1</sup> has illustrated how modern social contexts and assumptions shape scholarly pre-understandings of what is generally true of human social life, and consequently limit the number of options available to historians in their reconstructions of the past. The assumptions which are currently operative in OT scholarship, even though they are not unquestioned in the social science context itself, are positivism (the only valid form of knowledge is objective knowledge of the kind accepted by the natural sciences), reductionism (the tendency to explain the complex in terms of the simple, as through the use of models), relativism (issues of morality and religion are never totally right or wrong in any absolute sense), and determinism (the tendency to think that human values, choices and actions are determined by certain variable in the social and cultural environment). By understanding the past within a framework formed by these categories it becomes meaningful and relevant to a modern audience. Thus, Wilson's argument<sup>2</sup> that the prophet's message is an expression of the internalized values of his support group, behind which may be found socio-political and socio-economic concerns, reflects a relativistic and deterministic outlook; his application of the simple model of the prophet and his support group to complex data where it is inappropriate reflects positivism and reductionism in that the model becomes a historical datum rather than simply a heuristic device. In Gottwald's study<sup>3</sup> relativism and determinism are apparent in his treatment of Israelite religion as a projection of the economic and political interests of society. Positivism and reductionism appear in his presentation of ancient Israel as conforming to all the rules of the macro-sociological theories of Durkheim, Weber and Marx.

Herion has clearly shown that much current OT scholarship works on the basis of certain often unacknowledged cultural and philosophical assumptions.



These assumptions belong to the nature of the philosophical and sociological traditions to which Wilson and Gottwald belong or which they have used as the means best suited to their historical task. It is a tradition which has particularly close affinities with the sociological method to be traced back to Durkheim, a method which clearly reflects the characteristics isolated by Herion. At that point, however, where he presents his own criticism of the views of Wilson and Gottwald, Herion has introduced a certain confusion which has important implications for sociological method. So, Wilson's relativism and determinism are said to have the result that "the prophet's genuine sense of any 'good' transcending his social group's interests" has been effectively denied"; and it is also held that "the diminished capacity of the individual to believe autonomously in absolutes - which is characteristic of the secular, modern world - has been projected on to the world of the ancient Near East".<sup>4</sup> In similar vein, Gottwald is criticized for allowing his particular social scientific understanding of religion to determine the religious understanding of the ancient Israelites themselves. The result, argues Herion, is a historical reconstruction unable to concede the Israelite peasant's ability to possess any genuine sense of good, transcending their own socio-political goals and socio-economic interests.

The particular problem with this criticism is that it confuses a modern social science understanding of the nature and function of religion with what Israelites themselves believed. Gottwald and Wilson do not intend primarily to describe what the ancient Israelites actually believed; rather, they set out to explain, with the help of sociological theory, the origin and nature of those beliefs.

In a study which relates directly to this issue, Logerson<sup>5</sup> has proposed that the sociological methodology advocated by Runciman should be adopted for OT studies. According to Runciman, sociology has different aims and approaches which may be defined in terms of distinct levels. These are the levels of reportage, description and evaluation. Reportage is the gathering together of information in value free language. It is a level which

poses particular problems for the OT scholar who has so little in the way of concrete information at his disposal. OT historical reconstruction, therefore, frequently makes use of models derived from elsewhere in order to compensate for the poverty of the data yielded directly by ancient Israel. Models, however, properly belong to the level of explanation, rather than that of reportage, and the consequent inevitable risk that the two levels will be confused, can be easily illustrated from the history of OT study as a real danger. Thus, for example, the amphictyony, intended as an analogy or model of explanation for the pre-monarchic Israel, quickly came to be accepted as a simple historical datum.

Description is concerned with what it was like to be in a particular society or situation; it can make direct use of the OT to expound what it was like to be a member of the people of Yahweh. The historical accuracy or credibility of the information provided by the OT is not at issue at this point; here the information is taken as a reflection of the beliefs and attitudes of the ancient Israelites. At this level of description religion may be described in idealist terms even when these may be inappropriate at other levels, particularly at the level of explanation. The careful distinction between the levels of explanation and description is then one possible way of coping with the proposals of Gottwald and Wilson, while avoiding the confusion introduced by Herion's criticism.

Evaluation involves passing a moral judgment on phenomena on the basis of the observer's own values, of which, in order to avoid distortion at other levels, the observer should be constantly aware. So, the observer's preference for prophetic religion over against priestly religion, or his dislike of sacrificial ceremonial, should not determine judgments at the levels of reportage, explanation or description.

This is an attractive and at first sight persuasive method of approach. What is especially attractive about it at this point is that it avoids the so-called genetic fallacy, that is, the view that the nature, significance and truth of something is to be decided on the basis of an account of its origins. In the context of ancient Israel, it allows us to explain



the religion of Israel by reference to social and economic factors, while the question of the nature, significance and truth of that religion still remains to be decided on a level of description.

This is, however, a refinement of sociological method involving certain presuppositions which should be articulated. In the first place, and most obviously, the articulation of a level of value-free reportage, with reference either to the reconstruction of history or to theorizing about contemporary society, presupposes an objectivism, or at least a degree of objectivism, which could be acceptable only in the most principled of positivistic and empirical contexts. Given the possibility of reporting all phenomena, such reporting does take place is based upon selection, and selection can be made only on the basis of explanation and evaluation. These may be unconscious procedures, but none the less real for all that: those events are reported which are important to the reporter, and that judgment is made not simply on the basis of their intrinsic significance, but more particularly on the basis of the reporter's own values, and on the basis of synchronic and diachronic framework of explanation and causality into which those events have been fitted, a framework which, whether explicitly formulated or not, is still there. This is true of both historical sociology and of contemporary sociology.<sup>6</sup> Obvious as it is, this point should be emphasized, because it relates directly to the more difficult and equally potentially distorting distinction between explanation and description. The distinction made here rests on a distortion which in turn rests on an underlying ideology. It is significant that explanation and description are distinct levels which are to be approached in that order. Since the level of description follows that of explanation, the beliefs of individuals that it was like to be a member of the people of Yahweh) are effectively excluded as causative factors, that is, essential elements in the development of the level of explanation, and are confined to a level of description which is considered only after explanation has already been concluded. The individual is thus seen as the product of his social and economic environ-

ment, an environment which has originated for reasons quite independent of his thoughts and intentions and which in fact is the very foundation of those thoughts and intentions.

The implication of this is that Runciman's methodology is apparently a materialistic and positivist approach; not surprisingly, it forms a good sociological theoretical framework for the proposals of Gottwald and Wilson. If the method is to be criticized, such a criticism must be made in the first instance not on the basis of the effects of the method on the view of Israelite history and religion which results from it, but on the theoretical level of the sociological understanding of the individual and society which it presupposes.

## II

In a comprehensive critique of what he refers to as naturalistic social science, because of its view that the methods and objectives of social science are more or less those of natural science, Giddens<sup>8</sup> has argued that the empirical areas of research in the social sciences have not yet caught up with what is happening in social theory in that they continue to work from an old naturalistic perspective. In social theory, however, there is coming into existence a different perspective which integrates strands from English-speaking and continental philosophy. This may be seen in the emerging understanding of the nature of human action. Objectivists who stress society and institutions have failed to deal adequately with the qualities which must be attributed to human agents: self-understanding, intentionality, acting for reasons. Subjectivists, on the other hand, tend to skirt issues concerned with long term processes of change and the large scale organization of institutions. Action is not simply an aggregate of intentions; rather, it has an essential temporality which is part of its constitution and so is related to those concepts, structures and institutions which have been so important for objectivists.

Giddens argues, therefore, that the relationship between individual action and society should be



nderstood by analogy with Saussure's linguistic model of relationship between langue and parole. In the linguistic context, structure consists of absences and presences embedded in the instantiation of language in speech or in texts. That is to say, every act of speaking or writing presupposes, is carried out within the context of, at the same time both creates and yet is made possible by, the structure of the language, a structure which is both present and absent in every act of speaking or writing. So also in the social context, institutions and societies have structural properties in virtue of the continuity of the actions of their component members; but these members of society are able to carry out their day to day activities only in virtue of their capability of instantiating those structural properties.

Giddens has proposed, therefore, that the notion of human freedom and purposeful actions should be maintained with four qualifications. Firstly, individuals act according to the conventions of their milieu. Secondly, most of the knowledge we have of the conventions which define our actions is not only contextual, it is basically practical and ad hoc; our discourse about our actions and our reasons for them touches only on certain aspects of what we do in our day to day lives. Thirdly, our activities constantly have consequences that we do not intend and of which we might be quite oblivious when undertaking the behaviour in question; so, while as social agents we are necessarily the creators of social life, social life is at the same time not our own creation. Fourthly, the study of the intertwining of what is intended and what is not is a task of elementary importance in sociology; all action is situated in limited time-space contexts, so all of us are influenced by institutional orders that none of us intentionally established.

It is wholly in keeping with this to think in terms of the individual as one who creatively responds to his situation through the conventions available in his time. His relationship to his social structure is one of creative interdependence and interaction, and this implies that his understanding and his meaning are an integral element in the nature of the society to which he belongs. The explanation of Israelite society must,

therefore, involve the intentions and understandings of those who participated in that society. This restoration of the individual to his proper role in society opens the way to an almost overwhelming range of complex issues which then directly impinge on the sociological task. If the actor is an active participant in the creation of society, and not just the passive reflection of society, then an adequate sociology must include an adequate understanding of the individual, both biologically and psychologically. The need for this can never be disguised by all the assertions of structural fundamentalism and the rest of the naturalistic approach in sociology.

### III

In at least three respects these considerations must affect our approach to the reconstruction of Israelite history, society and religion, and force a modification of some recent materialist trends.

In the first place, the materialist critique of much current<sup>10</sup> history writing, as advanced by Whitelam and others, must be modified. This critique is aimed primarily at the "great men make history" approach, which concentrates on the great personalities and the unique events as the prime movers and the most significant and noteworthy elements in historical reconstruction. On the materialist theory, however, even the great personalities are pawns in a historical process over which they have no control, and it is this process which explains the unique events, rather than the other way around. The available written sources, moreover, suffer in the materialist view from these idealist distortions, and to follow them or to assign them priority is to perpetuate the illusions that the materialist approach seeks to destroy. The materialist approach, therefore, seeks to establish the priority of the non-biblical sources over against the Bible: geography, archaeology, the study of climate. These become the foundations of reliable, objective history, providing knowledge of the real causes of the historical process.

The criticism of this materialist approach must effect a readjustment in order to re-incorporate the human actor as a real cause in history. This



-incorporation, however, must be within the parameters of the understanding of the nature of human action, sketched out by Giddens, and worked out in detail for the context from the information provided by biblical and non-biblical sources. History is indeed made by men, but it is made in response to given environmental conditions and through the medium of contemporary conventions. The written sources of the OT may be onesided in their emphasis on human actions, but they nevertheless record what is integral and constitutive of social situations and not just reflections of those situations. The restoration to history of the individual, even though in a modified role, implies also the restoration of the written record, even though also in qualified form.

Secondly, the last two qualifications made by Giddens are the idea of human freedom and purposeful action related to the need to distinguish between the intentional and the unintentional consequences of individual action. This can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, Giddens himself relates it to the distinction between the consequences which are intended by the actor and those unintended consequences which follow as a result of the effects of individual action within the wider social context. This is an important qualification of human freedom which is part of that integration of human action within the context of its realizing or instantiating the conventions of contemporary society. There is, however, another aspect to this distinction which is that it may be taken to relate to conscious intentions on the one hand, and to subconscious or unconscious intentions on the other. If the validity of such a distinction is admitted, and the unconscious as well as the conscious are then seen as powerful influences on individual actions, then human psychology becomes of primary importance for OT study<sup>11</sup>.

In a limited way, theory deriving from social psychology has been fruitfully used in the elucidation of the prophets. Carroll's study of selected prophetic texts in the framework of dissonance theory has shown that "some of the hermeneutic processes evident in the prophetic traditions are indications of dissonance response;"<sup>12</sup> that is, the tensions between a prophecy and factors which negate it gave rise to various strategies designed to ease that tension and these are reflected in the texts. This is a good example of the positive contribution which

a more comprehensive psychological or psychoanalytical approach might make to the elucidation of Israelite history and society.

Thirdly, if the structuralist functionalist understanding of the nature of the individual is deficient and onesided, the same must also be the case with the structural functionalist understanding of religion. If men creatively respond to their environment within the framework of and realizing the conventions of their time, then their thinking, including their religious thinking, must be understood as part of their ordering activity. Religion, then, cannot be understood simply as an objectification of primary social realities, but rather as part of that process of culture formation through which men order their worlds.

Berger has argued<sup>13</sup> that religious phenomena cannot be understood to manifest themselves as different from human projections, since nothing is immune to the relativization of socio-economic analysis. It is only 'in, with and under' the immense array of human projections that indications of a reality that is truly other will be found. Theological thought should, then, seek out signals of transcendence within the empirically given human situations, such signals are constituted by prototypical human gestures, reiterated acts and experiences that appear to express essential aspects of man's being. These may be found in humour, in play, in hope, in absolute condemnation, in all of which the empirically given is transcended, but above all in the human propensity for order, in the belief that the created order of society corresponds to an underlying order of the universe, a divine order that supports and justifies all human attempts at ordering, a divine order in the universe in which it makes sense to trust. This argument that human projections are thus reflections of ultimate reality implies that religion is then both a human projection and at the same time not simply relative to human social and cultural conditions. It can be understood as the cultural expression of constant human dispositions and attitudes which are themselves reflections of a divine order in reality.

This is a form of understanding which finds points of



contact with psychological and psychoanalytical approaches to religion and society. It sees religion as a cultural expression of meaning bound in with the human attempt to create a meaningful universe. It has difficulty, however, in accounting for radical change and development in such meaning systems, while it shares with all such approaches the particular problem of the questionable 'necessity' for positing any ultimate reality to which these human dispositions and projections correspond.

In a study which makes significant advances on both of these questions, Theissen<sup>14</sup> has argued that the most appropriate way of understanding the nature of both religious and scientific thought, and the relationship between them, is within the framework of evolution. The theory of biological evolution sees organisms as having developed through mutation and selection as a means of achieving better adaptation to reality. In a parallel way, culture, expressed in science, art and religion, has developed different forms in the process of adapting to reality. Mutation in biological evolution is parallel to adaptation in cultural evolution. The difference between biological and cultural evolution is constituted by human consciousness. This introduces into cultural evolution the possibility of adaptive change of behaviour as an alternative to elimination of unsuitable life forms which selection in the biological context implies. Within culture, both science and faith are processes of adaptation. The scientific picture of the world is not identical with reality, but is a form of adaptation to reality. Reality itself is 'other' and mysterious; behind all the phenomena we have intimations of a central reality which determines and conditions everything.

Evolutionary theory confirms that the mysterious reality to which we are related in all our structures of adaptation is a single, central reality, which discloses itself to us step by step under various aspects. So, knowledge and faith agree that behind the world which we interpret there is an intrinsic reality which we cannot yet grasp adequately, that our life is a structure of adaptation to this reality which is partly successful, and that all attempts at adaptation relate to a single, central reality. From the rationality of our brains

it can further be argued that the reality which makes its evolution possible is itself rational. Faith is the attempt to understand the whole of life as a response to that ultimate reality.

Ultimate reality is more than a productive force; in sickness and death it also shows itself as the merciless process of selection, as that which encounters our resistance and rejection in personal and social experience. It is thus that this central reality is the 'creator' of the limited world in which we live and which takes shape in adaptation to it. Science and faith can both affirm this reality as a productive force because it calls forth from both responses which overcome its harshness. Despite their differences, these responses are both experimental attempts at adaptation to ultimate reality which came about by unplannable mutations. In science, the new paradigm, the mutation of our cognitive structures, can hardly be planned; in religion, the revelations and revealers (charismatics) in the history of religions are such mutations.

Monotheistic religion is a projection within the history of trial and error aimed at achieving an adequate adaptation to the ultimate reality. In Israel it was achieved through conflict over the exclusiveness of Yahweh in the pre-exilic period, over his uniqueness in the exilic period, and over his universality in the meeting with Hellenistic philosophical monotheism. It was not the result of a continuous development, but appeared suddenly as a spiritual mutation, a revolutionary transformation of consciousness, a mutation of our religious structures of adaptation to the ultimate reality; it is a protest against polytheism and against the values and patterns of behaviour attributed to other gods; it is always critical of society, since in polytheism the multiplicity of related gods is a reflection of a society differentiated according to the distribution of work.

Theissen's study is a major contribution to our understanding of the nature of religion, and fits well within the framework of the new understanding of the nature of human action described by Giddens. As part of the culture process of adaptation to reality,



religion has structural affinities with other cultural processes and yet some significant variations. Theissen summarizes these in a sentence which he then considerably qualifies: science works with hypotheses and the falsification principle and delights in dissent, while religion is apodictic, going against the facts and depending on consent; science is quick and direct and oriented to the future, while religion is slow and halting and oriented to the past. It is precisely this combination of difference with a common structural affinity which means that there cannot be any single and simple description of the relationship between society and religion, and also that the discussion which has priority is in the end fruitless. Society, insofar as it can be isolated as a fact to be described, is a cultural phenomenon which emerges from a conglomerate of factors; among these both scientific knowledge and faith as interrelated human constructions operate to help in the formation of human ways of living in response to a reality which, though unperceived, makes itself felt in creative and successful development and in harsh resistance and limitation. Within cultural evolution, the relationship between religion and other social and cultural expressions must always be one of identity and difference, identity in that religion shares with the rest of culture the quality of being response, response not simply to the environment narrowly conceived but to that reality to which the natural environment also responds, and difference in that religion concerns itself with the totality of our lives, with the essence of our being, and has its experience of resonance and its experiences of resistance at the very limits of human life and consciousness.<sup>15</sup>

It is a pleasure and a privilege to offer this as a small token of esteem and gratitude to Professor J. Weingreen on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

#### Notes

1. G.A. Herion, "The Impact of Modern and Social Scientific Assumptions on the Reconstruction of

Notes (Contd)

- Israelite History", JSOT 34, 1986, 3-33.
2. R.R. Wilson, Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel, Fortress Press, 1980
3. N.K. Gottwald, The Tribes of Yahweh: a sociology of the religion of liberated Israel 1250-1050 B.C.E. SCM Press 1980.
4. Herion, op.cit., 11
5. J. Rogerson, "The Use of Sociology in Old Testament Studies", VT 36, 1985, 245-256
6. Cf. J.M. Sassoon, "On Choosing Models for Recreating Israelite Pre-Monarchic History", JSOT 21, 1981, 3-24, who has shown how American and European historians of ancient Israel have been influenced by their own contexts.
7. Runciman's adherence to the British School of analytic philosophy is noted by Rogerson, op.cit. 256
8. A. Giddens. Social Theory and Modern Sociology, Polity Press 1987, 52ff
9. ibid., 6ff
10. K. Whitelam, "Recreating the History of Israel", JSOT 35, 1986, 45-70. See also F.S. Frick, The Formation of the State in Ancient Israel: a survey of models and theories, Sheffield 1985
11. Cf R. Bock, Freud and Modern Society", Nelson 1976, 8: "a sociology of the unconscious would.....point out the unintended consequences of social action... (and) the part unconscious emotional processes play in both the creation and maintenance of existing societies, and their role in creating change".
12. R.P. Carroll, When Prophecy Failed: reactions and responses to failure in the Old Testament prophetic traditions, SCM Press 1979, 124
13. P. Berger, A Rumour of Angels, Penguin 1970
14. G. Theissen, Biblical Faith, SCM Press 1984

Notes (Contd)

15. It is then clear that no sharp distinction is possible between ideology and theology. Religion or faith will necessarily have characteristics of both. See the discussion in P.D. Miller, "Faith and Ideology in the Old Testament", Magnalia Dei. The Mighty Acts of God (Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright) ed. F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke, P.D. Miller, Doubleday 1976, 464-479

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# P AS AN ORIGINALLY INDEPENDENT SOURCE IN THE PENTATEUCH

E. W. NICHOLSON

Throughout the period since J. Wellhausen's work on the composition of the Pentateuch /1/ the dominant view has been that there once existed an independent Priestly narrative which began with the account of creation in Gen. 1 and continued its narration up to at least the period immediately prior to Israel's settlement in Canaan. That not all of the material which we can label P belonged to that original narrative has also been widely agreed, though opinions vary in detail as to what material, especially in the extensive legislation contained in the account of the revelation at Sinai in Exod. 19 - Num. 10, was incorporated by way of secondary accretions, whether before or after the combination of P with the older Pentateuchal sources.

Throughout this same period, however, a minority view has persisted that P never was an independent narrative, and that the material assigned to it is best explained as deriving from an editor or tradent who reworked the older sources incorporating a mass of additional material, some from sources which he inherited and some composed by himself. Such a view was argued in the latter part of the nineteenth century by, for example, S. Maybaum and A. Klostermann, earlier this century by J. Orr, A. C. Welch, M. Löhr, P. Volz, subsequently by I. Engnell, and in still more recent years by, for example, F. M. Cross, R. Rendtorff, S. Tengström, E. Blum, and R. N. Whybray/2/. Of these more recent writers, Cross has provided

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1. J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, Berlin 1885, 2nd edit. 1889, 3rd edit. 1899. (The work originated in the form of articles published in *Jahrbuch für deutsche Theologie*, 21, 1876, and 22, 1877).

2. For a discussion of the earlier debate see J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, Edinburgh 1910, 2nd edit. 1930; *The Divine Names in Genesis*, London 1914; C. R. North, 'Pentateuchal Criticism', in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H. H. Rowley, Oxford 1951, pp. 48-83. The more recent works referred to are: F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, Cambridge Mass. and London 1973, pp. 293-325; R. Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch*, BZAW 147, New York

the most comprehensive statement of this view, and the following outline and discussion will focus largely upon his arguments, though the more narrowly based arguments of Tengström will also be briefly discussed. A fresh review of the evidence for such a view requires no apology. The issue is not an end in itself but is fundamental for an understanding of the origin and composition of the Pentateuch as a whole which is currently a subject of renewed debate. What follows is intended as a contribution to this debate.

## (I)

Cross begins with an analysis of the Priestly 'tradent's' theology (pp. 295-300). As edited by this tradent, history from creation to Moses is 'periodized' into four ages, those of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Each period after creation is marked by a covenant, and this system of covenants, reaching its climax at Sinai, constitutes P's main theological concern. The first was the Noachic covenant (Gen. 9:1-17), a covenant made by <sup>2</sup>Elōhīm with all flesh, that is, a universal covenant. The second covenant, made with Abram (17:1-27), is 'at once deeper and narrower than the Noachic. More is revealed to fewer. <sup>2</sup>Elōhīm, "God," now revealed himself by his more intimate and precise epithet <sup>2</sup>Ēl Šadday' (p. 296). Abram receives the new name Abraham together with the blessing 'I will make thee exceedingly fruitful . . . and kings shall come forth from thee'. The sign of this covenant, and also its law, is circumcision. This Abrahamic covenant was then extended to Isaac (Gen. 17:21; 21:4) and subsequently more fully to Jacob (Gen. 35:9-13). Though both of these first two covenants remained valid, however, each was provisional, a stage on the way to God's ultimate covenant and ultimate self-disclosure - the revelation at Sinai and the covenant made there with Moses and Israel. Its 'prologue' is set out in Exod. 6:2-9 where God's proper name, Yahweh, is finally disclosed. This gives the sequence <sup>2</sup>Elōhīm, <sup>2</sup>Ēl Šadday, Yahweh in the Priestly

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and Berlin 1977; S. Tengström, *Die Toledothformel und die literarische Struktur der priesterlichen Erweiterungsschicht im Pentateuch*, Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 17, Lund 1981; E. Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, WMANT 57, Neukirchen 1984; R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch*, JSOT Supplement Series 53, Sheffield 1987.

schema of covenants, the general appellative, "god," the archaic epithet, "ʾĒl Šadday," and the unique proper name "Yahweh." (p. 298.) This prologue also renews the promise of the land, but now places it within the context of a new and central theme: 'I am Yahweh, and I will bring you forth from under the burdens of Egypt . . . and I will take you to be my people and I will become your God and you shall know that I am Yahweh . . . and I will bring you into the land' (vv. 6-8). The blessing of the covenant is expressed in its appropriate place in the list of blessings at the close of the covenant formulary (Lev. 26:9). The sign of the covenant is the sabbath (Exod. 31:13, 16f.). That God may 'tabernacle' among his people - that was the purpose of this covenant, expressed most decisively in Lev. 26:11-13 and Exod. 29:45-6, and the elaborate cultic requirements prescribed in the making of this covenant were 'the device contrived by Yahweh to make possible his "tabernacling" in Israel's midst, which alone could make full the redemption of Israel' (pp. 299-300).

Such a well-defined and carefully executed theology does not imply, however, that P was originally an independent narrative. According to Cross, P is 'most easily described as a . . . systematizing expansion of the normative JE tradition in the Tetrateuch' (pp. 294-5); the editor responsible for it was primarily concerned to supplement JE upon which he imposed 'framing elements', at the same time adding theological formulae and an occasional discrete document until reaching the description of the revelation at Sinai where he incorporated a mass of material.

In Genesis this editor enframed the J account of the *primaeval* history and the JE patriarchal history by means of a series of superscriptions employing the rubric 'these are the generations (*toledoth*) of . . .'. This formula was secondarily derived from an originally independent source 'The document of the generations of Adam' which has been preserved in 5:1-32 and 11:10-26. It is employed ten times (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2) and in each case is a superscription. That this series never formed part of an independent P narrative is evidenced especially by Gen. 2:4a which cannot be related to the preceding priestly story of creation but is clearly a P editorial heading to the exclusively J narrative of creation and the 'fall' in 2:4b-4:26. Its occurrence in 6:9 is similarly an editorial heading to the flood story which has been 'completely rewritten by P' (p. 303).

As for narrative material, one is struck by its paucity in the P passages in Genesis. Apart from ch. 23, the bulk of the P material



here consists of the blessing and covenant passages (9:1-17; 17:1-22; 28:1-9; 35:9-13; 48:3-7), none of which can properly be called a narrative, and most of which depend directly on a parallel JE narrative.

Cross goes on to suggest that 'perhaps the most persuasive evidence that the Priestly strata of the Tetrateuch never had existence as an independent narrative source comes from its omissions' (p. 306). He draws particular attention to the absence of a P account of humanity's sin and rebellion in the time before the flood. Apart from Gen. 2:4a, there is no P material in chs. 2-4. P's summary statement in 6:13 'The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them' must presuppose 'a knowledge of concrete and colorful narratives of the corruption of the creation. Otherwise, it has neither literary nor theological force' (p. 306). The P statement in Gen. 9:6 'He who spills man's blood, his blood shall be spilled by man', as well as the entire Priestly scheme of divine covenants must also presume a description of man's *primaevae* rebellion and sin. The paradox to which the generally accepted theory gives rise of an originally independent Priestly narrative which contained no account of this rebellion and sin is removed when P is seen instead as a tradent whose work incorporated the J narratives in Gen. 2-4.

Other narrative traditions absent from 'the putative P narrative' in Genesis are the story of Abraham's fidelity in Gen. 22, the thrice-told tale of the patriarch and his wife in the court of a foreign king (12:10-20; 20:1-17; 26:1-14), the search for a wife for Isaac and the discovery of Rebekah (24), the rivalry between Esau and Jacob for their father's blessing (27), Jacob's vision at Bethel (28:10-22), the entire Jacob-Laban cycle (29-33), the tale of Dinai and Shechem (34), and the Joseph narrative (37:2b-47:26 [50:26]). 'What remains makes poor narrative indeed.' (p. 307.)

The result is the same when one turns to Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. If possible, indeed, P here 'has even a lesser claim to being a narrative source' (p. 307); nor does it cease to depend on JE. Further, what is missing from the P material in these books, if it was an originally independent document, is no less striking than in the case of Genesis (pp. 317-21). For example, nothing is narrated about the birth of Moses, or of the episodes during his youth in Egypt or of his flight to the desert, whilst without the accompanying JE material concerning his death, nothing of the circumstances of it or of the place of his burial is narrated. But the most 'stunning omission' of all from

the alleged P narrative is an account of the covenant ceremony at Sinai, 'the climax to which the entire Priestly labor has been directed' (p. 318). 'It is not by chance that the P tradent poured his traditions into the Sinai section until it dwarfed all his other sections and indeed his other periods. The climactic blessing of Leviticus 26:11-13a stresses most clearly the supreme meaning of the covenant at Sinai, Yahweh's tabernacle in Israel's midst and thereby his covenant presence with his people . . . In looking to the darkness of exile and beyond, the last words of the peroration of Leviticus 26 [vv. 44f.] made Yahweh's purpose clear and the purpose of the Priestly hand which added this summary to the Holiness Code' (pp. 318-9). It is 'beyond credence' that P had no tradition of the covenant ceremonies at Sinai or that he had no covenant at all there. 'Either the Priestly tradent had the tradition and a redactor has removed it in combining P with JE, or he relied on the Epic tradition, especially the E tradition of Exodus 24:1-8. In our view, the latter alternative fits far more easily with the evidence' (p. 320).

## (II)

It is well known that in the source analysis of the Pentateuch the flood story in Gen. 6:5-8:22 has been regarded as particularly cogent evidence of the secondary combination by an editor of two originally independent narratives, J and P. For this reason critics of the documentary theory have devoted special attention to this story. All the more surprising, therefore, is Cross's bald statement that it has been 'completely rewritten by P'. In spite of many attempts to challenge it, the evidence in favour of the two-source theory of the composition of this narrative remains compelling <sup>3</sup>. Briefly stated, this evidence is as follows. First, there are discrepancies and contradictions. In J a distinction is maintained between clean and unclean animals, the clean entering the ark by sevens, the unclean by twos (7:2; cf. 8:20), whilst in P one pair of every animal without distinction between clean and unclean enters (6:19f.; 7:15-16). In J the flood is brought about by forty days of rain which began seven days after the command to enter the ark, and the waters of the flood

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3. For a detailed discussion see J. A. Emerton, 'An Examination of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis', Part I, VT 37, 1987, pp. 401-420, and Part II, VT 38, 1988, pp. 1-21.

subside after forty days (7:4, 10, 12; 8:6). In P a partially different cause of the flood is described - 'the fountains of the great deep (*tehom*) burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened' (7:11;8:2) - and the chronological scheme is also different: the waters increase for one hundred and fifty days and the entire duration of the flood is one year (7:6, 11, 13, 24; 8:3b, 4, 5, 13a, 14). Secondly, there is much repetition of commands and statements, and although some of this may be explained in terms of literary style, not all of it can plausibly be so accounted for but provides supporting evidence for the two-source theory/4/. Not duplicated, however, is the J record of the offering of a sacrifice by Noah after the flood (8:20), and it seems clear that the reason for this is that P reserved all offering of sacrifices until the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests at Sinai.

In the face of this evidence, it is difficult to comprehend how it can be claimed that a priestly tradent has 'completely rewritten' the flood story. Further, why would such a tradent have endeavoured to change so much of his supposed source and still have left it to tell so much of its own story, a story so manifestly at odds with what he himself evidently believed and to some extent in flat contradiction of it? Volz, acknowledging such a difficulty, suggested that the older J narrative had by the time of P acquired an authority which made it impossible to dispense with it /5/. If this was so, however, why did this editor nevertheless venture to change and contradict it in the ways indicated above? In short, a more plausible explanation of the discrepancies, contradictions, and repetitiveness of this story is to see them arising from a conflation by an editor of two originally separate and distinctive narratives.

Uncompelling also is Cross's argument concerning the absence from P of a narrative of humanity's *primaeval* rebellion which, he maintains, would have been a necessary presupposition of such a statement as that in Gen. 6:11-12 which speaks of the corruption of the world that had originally been 'good' in God's eyes (Gen. 1:31). It is only on the assumption that P *must* have presupposed a description of the fall that it can then be claimed that

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4. See J. A. Emerton, *VT* 37, 1987, pp. 411-413.

5. P. Volz and W. Rudolph, *Der Elohst als Erzähler. Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?*, BZAW 63, 1933, p. 141.



since no P narrative exists the priestly tradent depended upon the J narrative in Gen. 2-4. But the assumption is unwarranted. It is by no means clear that P at 6:11-12 has in mind these earlier stories. These verses speak of 'the earth' as being corrupt, of 'all flesh', that is, most likely, both the human and the animal realms, as having 'corrupted their way upon the earth'. (Contrast J's statement in 6:5 and 8:21 which refers specifically to the wickedness of men and in this way accords with what is narrated in chs. 2-4) It is likely that the priestly author knew the stories of J in Gen. 2-4. But Gen. 6:11-12 does not suggest that he had these stories directly in mind in composing what he here states, and there is no reason why he should not have said succinctly what was self-evident to his audience - the presence of sin and 'violence' in the world - without explaining it or composing an accompanying 'myth' or aetiology about its origin.

The absence from P of other narratives and episodes familiar in JE need not have the weight that Cross attaches to it but can be explained in other ways. The consistency with which, for example, stories reflecting what has aptly been termed the 'all too human' /6/ behaviour of ancestral figures are not represented in P may be because its author studiously avoided a retelling of them: such are, for example, the stories about Noah's drunkenness and those reflecting the doubtful morality of the patriarch and his wife in a foreign court, and the story of Jacob's treacherous deceit of Esau. In the case of Gen. 28:10-22 it is possible that the priestly author wished to avoid such a cult-foundation story, just as elsewhere he avoids those stories in which patriarchal figures build altars and thus found sanctuaries. (In his account of God's appearance to Jacob at Bethel in Gen. 35:6a, 9-13 he makes no mention of the building of an altar, in contrast to what is stated in the older material in 35:1, 3, 7.) The main reason, however, for the literary structure of P arises from its author's distinctive theology. His main emphasis is upon the foundation of the theocratic community of Israel at Sinai; this, as Cross himself states, dwarfs all that precedes. And to this end, it seems, only that is narrated of the periods preceding which is theologically required as necessary *praeparatio* : the story of creation concluding with the hidden foundation of the sabbath, the flood narrative concluding with the Noachic covenant, the covenant with Abraham and its extension to his descendants, the purchase of the burial place from Machpelah

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6. R. Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments*, Stuttgart 1978, p. 54.

signalling faith in the divine promise of the land, a story of Jacob's acquisition of wives from his parents' kin thus securing the racial purity of the coming 'congregation', an epitome of the story of the descent of Jacob and his sons to Egypt and of their subsequent bondage there - all this stitched together by a genealogical framework - the call of Moses, the revelation of the divine name Yahweh to him and the promise to deliver Israel from the burdens of the Egyptians, a plague narrative and the escape from Egypt, the journey to Sinai. In short, what emerges from the literary evidence is a coherent and well-executed theology within an appropriately structured literary presentation even though in the process of redaction some of the constituents of the latter have been left out /7/.

As in past debates about the character of P, the sequence of the names employed for God also merits more significance than Cross is willing to concede. In the P passage Exod. 6:2-9, which duplicates what is narrated in the older material in Exod. 3, God declares that he had revealed himself to the patriarchs as El Šadday and not by his name Yahweh which is now made known evidently for the first time to Moses. The sequence, to which Cross himself draws attention, Elohim-El Šadday-Yahweh is thereby completed, and it seems that such a sequence was of some importance for the writer responsible for P; it points to ever increasing degrees of revelation culminating in God's actions for Israel under Moses and the crowning meeting between Yahweh and his people at Sinai. Under this new name God intends to deliver his people from the burdens of the Egyptians and finally make them his own in fulfilment of the promise made to the forefathers (vv. 7-8). It is difficult to see, as older commentators pointed out, how the priestly writer of Exod. 6:2-9 could have been merely an editor or supplementer of the older Pentateuchal material which up to this stage flatly contradicts what is here narrated. But the passage is comprehensible on the basis that it derives from an originally independent P narrative that has been secondarily worked into the older sources by a scribe.

Reference to Exod. 6:2-9 leads us to Cross's argument concerning P's handling of the Sinai covenant of which, he believes, this passage is the 'prologue'. Assuming that the making of the covenant at Sinai was, as he maintains, crucially important for P, is it

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7. See further, V. Fritz, 'Das Geschichtsverständnis der Priesterschrift', *ZThK* 84, 1987, pp. 426-439.

not still somewhat strange that he did not compose an account of his own of the making of this covenant, just as he carefully set out the Noachic and Abrahamic covenants earlier? The absence of such an account is rendered all the more strange when what he is supposed to have 'relied' upon instead is considered. Exod. 24:3-8 narrates the building of an altar, the offering of sacrifices, and the priestly manipulation of blood before the institution proper of the cult at Sinai in P's apparent sequence of events in consistency with which hitherto in the Tetrateuch he studiously avoids any suggestion of a sacrificial cult. Thus, for example, in contrast to the older account of the covenant with Abraham in Gen. 15, in Gen. 17 P makes no mention of any sacrificial rite as having been employed. This surely renders it unlikely that, had P required a description of a covenant rite at Sinai, he would have 'relied' upon Exod. 24:3-8 thus abandoning a principle which he has hitherto followed.

That no P account of the making of the covenant at Sinai exists is most probably because, as many scholars have argued, the priestly author consciously rejected this tradition and instead subsumed the revelation at Sinai and the institution of the theocratic community and its cult there under the covenant with Abraham which was thus all-important for this author/8/. For P, Israel at Sinai 'stands in the covenant of Abraham'/9/; what happened at Sinai was a 'discharging of the earlier pledge of grace'/10/. In contrast to the covenant described in, for example, Exod. 24:3-8 or the book of Deuteronomy, P sets out 'a conception of Israel's covenant relationship to God which is unbreakable', that is, the Abrahamic covenant which is 'everlasting' and 'is not subject to any conditional element of law'/11/.

8. See for example W. Zimmerli, 'Sinaibund und Abrahambund: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Priesterschrift', *TZ* 16, 1960, pp. 268-280 = *Gottes Offenbarung. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament*, München 1963, pp. 205-216; *Grundriss der alttestamentlichen Theologie*, Stuttgart 1972, pp. 45-47, E. trs. *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, Edinburgh 1978, pp. 55-57; R. E. Clements, *Abraham and David*, London 1967, pp. 74-77.

9. W. Zimmerli, *Gottes Offenbarung*, p. 213.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

11. R. E. Clements, *Abraham and David*, p. 75.



Far from being 'beyond credence', therefore, P's omission of an account of the covenant at Sinai belongs to a coherent theological intention, indeed *kerygma*. And this too strengthens the view that the material in question once constituted an independent narrative.

### (III)

We turn finally to Cross's understanding of Gen. 2:4a as a superscription to what follows and not, as generally believed, a conclusion to the preceding creation story. In this he has received support from S. Tengström who has, however, gone further and argued that the whole of this verse is from a P redactor.

To consider first Tengström's view: against the generally accepted understanding of v. 4b as the beginning of the J narrative of creation, he argues (a) that the use of the verb עשה 'made', as against ברא 'created' in v. 4a, is not necessarily an indication that it derives from J rather than from P, since the latter elsewhere employs עשה as an alternative to ברא; (b) that the divine name Yahweh in v. 4b may be a gloss prompted by the use of this name in the narrative that follows; and (c) that syntactically the J narrative could have begun at v. 5; such a beginning, indeed, would reflect the sort of beginning found in other ancient Near Eastern creation stories, for example *Enuma Elish* (pp. 54-5). V. 4 as a whole, therefore, derives from a priestly editor and acts as a superscription to what follows, just as elsewhere the *toledoth* formula functions as a superscription. As such, this verse heads the narrative that follows up to the end of Gen. 4 which the priestly editor understood as the story of the 'generations' of the first humans after the creation narrated in Gen. 1. Viewed in this way the verse means something like 'These are the generations of heaven and earth (who lived) when these (heaven and earth) were created, at the time when Yahweh-God made heaven and earth' (p. 57).

Several difficulties render such a view improbable. First, and most obvious, unless other compelling reasons can be found, there are no grounds for regarding the name Yahweh in v. 4b as a gloss. Tengström himself acknowledges this (p. 54). Second, the order 'earth and heaven' in v. 4b is the reverse of this phrase in v. 4a - unless we change the former with the Samaritan text and the Syriac version to 'heaven and earth' - and the definite article employed with

both words in v. 4a is not used in v. 4b. These differences, which cannot seriously be explained in terms of a desired literary effect, are surely odd if both parts of the verse are from the same hand. Third, the phrase *וְכָל שֵׁיטַת הַשָּׂדֶה טָרַם יְהוָה בְּאַרְצָא* (v. 5) would read strangely as the beginning of the story that follows and would be quite uncharacteristic of Hebrew narrative art. From a literary and syntactical point of view v. 4b remains the more likely beginning of this narrative, functioning as a protasis to a following apodosis, even though it is disputed whether the latter begins at v. 5 or v. 7.

For these reasons the generally accepted division of Gen. 2:4 between P and J remains the more plausible analysis of this much debated verse. But is v. 4a nevertheless a superscription to what follows, as Cross argues, or a conclusion to that precedes? Either way it is peculiar in this context. If it is a conclusion it departs from the use of the *toledoth* formula which elsewhere is a superscription, and it has also to be understood 'metaphorically'/12/ as applying to the generations of 'heaven and earth' rather than to humans, or as carrying some such generalized meaning as 'story of origins' rather than its usual connotation 'genealogy', 'family tree'/13/. On the other hand, if it is a superscription it also differs, necessarily so, from its use elsewhere by being unable to mention the names of the ancestors of the persons in the narratives that follow, since Adam had no ancestors. Further, 'the generations of the heavens and the earth' is surely a somewhat strained description of Adam and the other persons mentioned in Gen. 2-4. In short, there are difficulties for either view, and such are the verse's peculiarities that it is a weak basis on which to argue that P was a redactor rather than an author. Even if it is conceded, however, that it is a superscription to what follows, and thus an editorial addition, as Cross maintains, it does not constitute evidence that P as a whole in the Pentateuch is the work of an editor rather than from an originally independent narrative, for the documentary theory in arguing that the P material was worked into the older JE material also allowed for the possibility that the priestly

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12. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 9th edit., Edinburgh 1913, p. 6.

13. G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose*, *Genesis*, ATD 2-4, Göttingen 1956, E. trs. *Genesis*, London 1961, *in loc*.

redactor responsible for this may have on occasion inserted comments, linking passages, etc. which he felt necessary/14/.

Tengström, whose views on Gen. 2:4 were examined above, argues that the remaining *toledoth* passages in Genesis likewise provide evidence that P is the work of a redactor rather than the author of an originally discrete narrative. But these passages are a doubtful basis for such a view. It seems in fact that in the case of at least some of them one's assessment of the relation of the P material to the older sources depends on the view one already holds of the nature of P.

An example is provided by Tengström's discussion of Gen. 10. His source analysis of this chapter is the standard one, the J material being vv. 8-19, 21, 24-30, the P sections vv. 1-7, 20, 22-3, 21, 32, the P material thus forming the framework. According to Tengström this framework is not the work of a redactor employing an already existing independent P narrative; rather, it was P himself, understood as an editor, who has constructed it and incorporated the J material into it. He offers two arguments in support of this. First, the structure of the subdivisions is the same in both J and P (p. 23):

(a) a statement of the genealogical descent of the people/ancestors, followed by

(b) a statement of their settlement and geographical 'spread'.

An example of this structure as employed by P is provided by vv. 2-5 (a = vv. 2-4; b = v. 5. Cf. v. 32). Examples in J are vv. 8-12 (a = vv. 8-9; b = vv. 10-12); vv. 15-19 (a = vv. 15-18a; b = vv. 18b-19); vv. 26-30 (a = vv. 26-29; b = v. 30). That both J and P use the same structure, he argues, is best explained on the assumption 'that the author of the P material employed the older material as the model for his own contribution' (p. 23). But the conclusion that Tengström draws from this observation does not necessarily follow. That is, it does not follow that P was necessarily an editor rather than an author; it is clearly just as possible that he was an author who adopted the form from J in composing his own independent narrative which (or some of which) was subsequently combined by an editor with the older J narrative. Alternatively, the conclusion is equally warranted that both the Yahwist and the P author independently employed a common form.

Tengström's second argument is as follows. In v. 6 P lists the sons of Ham (Cush, Egypt, Put, Canaan), but in v. 7 expands only

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14. See the apt comments on this by J. A. Emerton, VT 37, 1987, p. 402.



on Cush and not upon Canaan, as one expects, since it is mentioned last in the list. A genealogy of Canaan is, however, given in the J passage later in the chapter (vv. 15-19), and the conclusion cannot be avoided, Tengström contends, that the reason P did not expand on Canaan at v. 6 was because he reserved such expansion to the J passage which he, working as an editor, incorporated later in the chapter (pp. 23-4). It is clear once again, however, that what Tengström describes is capable of an alternative explanation, namely, that a redactor combining originally independent P and J passages chose J's genealogy in vv. 15-19 rather than P's (assuming the latter contained one).

The same holds also in the case of the material relating to Arpachshad in 10:22-3 (P), 24-30 (J), and 11:10-16 (P). In 10:23 P expands upon the descendants of Aram, even though, according to Tengström, we expect him to expand instead upon Arpachshad whose line leads to Abraham (11:10-13). Arpachshad's line is, however, given in the immediately following J passage (10:24-30) which has the sequence Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, and Peleg, exactly as in P's genealogy in 11:10-16. 'The only probable assumption here is that the author of the P material in chapter 11 depended upon the J section in chapter 10' (p. 24). Once again, however, it is only an assumption that P was bound to expand upon Arpachshad at 10:22f. and that, since what follows concerning this ancestor is from J, P was therefore an editor who utilized J instead of composing his own material for this genealogy. It could equally well be that P did not here expand upon Arpachshad's line because he wished to reserve this for ch. 11. Alternatively, if the assumption be granted that P was bound to expand upon Arpachshad after 10:22f., the presence of the J material in vv. 24-30 could again equally well be accounted for as the work of a redactor combining an originally independent P narrative with J and at this point choosing J's genealogy. Further, if P at 11:10-16 was dependent upon J's genealogy in 10:24-30, why should it necessarily follow from this that he was an editor? It is equally possible that he was an author who used J in composing his own independent narrative. Here too, therefore, one's assessment of the relation of the P material to the older source depends on the view one already holds of the character of P. In short, taken by itself, the material in Gen. 10 and 11 settles nothing in the issue under discussion.

In my opinion, what is evident of the genealogies in Gen. 10 and 11 is the case also in the genealogical passages throughout that book. It seems clear that material from both JE and P has been

combined by a redactor, in ways creatively so. (Tengström's monograph is a valuable contribution for its exposition of the function of these genealogies in Genesis.) But it is clear also that these passages by themselves are an insufficient basis on which to determine whether this redactor was P himself rather than one who combined an already existing P source with JE.

A further argument adduced by Tengström remains to be briefly considered. It arises from the absence of a P narrative of the conquest in the book of Joshua where, according to the view currently generally accepted, P is represented by only a small number of sporadic texts. Tengström shares this view. He rejects Noth's well known claim that P in the Tetrateuch is disinterested in the settlement in the land and that the so-called P texts in Joshua are merely secondary insertions in the style of P. Rather, he argues, the P editor of the Tetrateuch looks to the settlement as a fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, and relies upon the book of Joshua for the account of this. The P texts in Joshua evidence this. Since, however, these texts are clearly of an editorial nature, they offer additional support for the view that P was an editor of the Hexateuch rather than the author of an independent narrative (pp. 14-15).

A discussion of the composition of the book of Joshua is beyond the scope of the present essay. This much may be said, however, in response to Tengström's claim. It may be conceded that such P material as there is in Joshua is editorial and not derived from an originally independent source. But there are obvious differences between this material and P in the Tetrateuch. Unlike the latter, in Joshua P does not form the framework of the narrative; rather, it is set within the Deuteronomistic framework. Absent too is a priestly chronological scheme, so characteristic of the P material in the Tetrateuch. Such differences render the P texts in Joshua inadmissible as a basis on which to draw conclusions concerning the origin of the P material in the Tetrateuch.

In conclusion: the arguments by such recent writers as Cross and Tengström that there never was an independent P narrative and that instead the P material in the Pentateuch is in its entirety the work of an editor of JE are unconvincing. The documentary theory remains the most probable explanation of the origin of this material, namely, that in part it derives from an originally independent Priestly narrative which has been secondarily combined with the older JE material by a

redactor who with other editors also added further material not contained in the original P narrative.



It is a very special pleasure to dedicate this essay to Jacob Weingreen whom I am privileged to have had as my teacher and whose friendship over the years I count as one of my richest blessings.

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## THE KINGDOM OF EDMO<sup>1</sup>

J. R. Bartlett

Most of Dr Weingreen's former colleagues and students will be well aware that when he retired the Board of Trinity College renamed the museum he founded 'The Weingreen Museum of Biblical Antiquities'. On display in that museum is a collection of pottery and other artefacts from Edom, and it is therefore not inappropriate, in honouring the museum's former Director, for the present Curator to indulge his own interests, and to describe the results of recent research into the kingdom of Edom.

The first and in some ways the most interesting thing about Edom is that the biblical atlases are often uncertain exactly where to write the name and always hesitant to draw its boundaries. That is not surprising, because the biblical evidence is complex, and not all the Edomite biblical place names can be firmly identified. The name Edom means 'red', and is generally taken to refer to the reddish sandstone which is a feature of the mountain range running south along the east side of the Wadi Araba south of the Dead Sea and well known to visitors to Petra. The heartland of Edom lay here, a region some 75 miles from north to south, between the Wadi el-Hesa and Ras en-Naqb, and about 30 miles wide from west to east, between the Wadi Araba and the modern Desert Highway from Amman to Aqaba. This is high land, much of it over 5000 ft; when Jeremiah threatens Edom, he pictures the invading enemy - perhaps he has a Babylonian king in mind - mounting up and flying swiftly like an eagle and spreading his wings against Bozrah: a most appropriate picture for Bozrah, now the village of Buseirah. When I left it early one morning in 1974, I watched an eagle spiralling high above it; and one remembers Obadiah's words about Edom:

You who live in the clefts of the rock, whose dwelling is high, who say in your heart, Who will bring me down to the ground? Though you soar aloft like an eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, thence I will bring you down, says the LORD.

To the north of Edom, across the biblical river Zered, the modern Wadi el-Hesa, lay Moab; to the south lay Teman (the word means 'south') and Midian; to the east lay the desert home of various Arabian tribes, and to the west, across the Wadi Araba, lay the Negeb of Judah. In the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. there seems to have been some Edomite settlement

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1 This paper was first delivered as a lecture to the Palestine Exploration Fund on 15th December 1987.

in this region south of Judah, and by the Hellenistic period much of what had been southern Judah was known as Idoumaia. This paper is mainly concerned with the mountains east of the Wadi Araba, and with two sites at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba.

It is worth asking to begin with why such a difficult region was viable as the home of a nation and its kingdom. It had long been viable, first as hunting ground and then as grazing land for sheep and goats; but what gave it importance in the age of great empires like the Assyrian and Babylonian empires of the first millenium B.C. was its position on the main North-South route between Damascus and Arabia, and on the cross route between Arabia and the Mediterranean at Gaza. Edom was of strategic importance to the Assyrian empire (8th-7th century B.C.) which expended much effort on trying to control the Arabs, and to the Babylonian empire (6th century), whose last major ruler, Nabonidus, actually established himself for a decade at Teima, in NW Arabia, having first subjected Edom. Earlier, Solomon in the 10th century had established a seaport at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba for the sake of trade with distant Ophir for its gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks, and later, in the 4th or 3rd century B.C. the Nabataeans established Petra as their entrepôt. And in addition, in the Wadi Araba just below the Edomite mountains, there was copper for those with the skill and capital resources to extract it. Edom could flourish, if there were sufficient military and capital input to control it and make it flourish. But for much of its history, in biblical and other times, this region has remained a backwater (if that is the right word for such a mountainous and desert region).

The biblical writers, mostly men of Jerusalem and Judah, had little if any first-hand knowledge of Edom. They knew Edom mainly as the most hostile of Judah's neighbours, much as for centuries most Englishmen knew Scotland or Ireland. And Edom has remained largely unknown to the European west except through the pages of the Old Testament. Edom had no holy cities to attract western pilgrims; Edom's pilgrims were Muslim en route for Mecca, among whom Christians were not welcome. Edom did not attract European traders; their routes east to Persia and India went other ways. The first important European traveller in this region was Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1810, 1854-59) who in January-April 1806 travelled from Damascus south to Kerak and round the bottom of the Dead Sea to Jerusalem. He did not enter Edom, but he did compile a useful list of villages, inhabited and ruined, in the area, and recognised Buseira as the biblical Bozrah, and Szille as the biblical Sela which Amaziah captured (2 Kings 14:7), anticipating Glubb Pasha by over a century. Seetzen is said to have died of poison at Aqaba. He was followed in 1812 by the Swiss traveller, J. L. Burckhardt (1822), famous for his rediscovery of the fabled Petra, but important to us for

his careful and detailed record of his journey through Edom in August 1812, mostly along the north-south route now signposted for tourists as 'The King's Highway', though whether this really is the route intended by the author of Num. 20:17 we cannot be sure. Burckhardt was followed by two English naval officers, Captains Irby and Mangles (1844), who in May 1818 followed a similar route south to Petra and became the first Europeans to ascend Mt. Hor, Jebel Harun, the traditional burial place of Aaron. In 1828 the Frenchman Leon de Laborde (1826, 1836) approached Petra from the south, travelling from Cairo via Sinai and Aqaba and up the Wadi Araba. This became the standard approach route for the rest of the 19th century; travellers from the north down the King's Highway being exposed to plunder and ransom demands from the Bene Sakhr and the Mejelli family of Kerak. Laborde was important because he gave Europeans the first accurate pictures of Petra, and so stimulated interest. It is fascinating to trace the 19th century travellers' accounts, among whom were artists like David Roberts, or W. H. Bartlett (on reaching Petra, he records that he dined off Irish stew in the Corinthian tomb), and churchmen like the Dean of Canterbury, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, who in his famous book *Sinai and Palestine* (1856) commented disparagingly of the Khazneh that 'there is nothing of peculiar grace or grandeur in the temple itself - it is of the most debased style'. In 1876 Charles Doughty (1888) solved the problem of accessibility as Burckhardt had, by living and travelling in Arab style. Whereas Canon Tristram (1873), travelling for the British Association in 1872, was held to ransom in Kerek Castle in Moab, Doughty actually travelled 4 years later as a pilgrim with the Haj caravan through Ma'an towards Mecca. His contribution was to explore the central hill region of Edom between Shaubak and Ma'an. But detailed scholarly exploration of Edom did not begin until the 1890s, when Alois Musil of Vienna (1907, 1908), and R. E. Brunnnow and A. von Domaszewski from Germany explored the highways and byways with systematic care, recording every milestone, cistern, and building, and publishing plans and inscriptions (1904, 1905, 1909). English readers were made more aware of the area by T. E. Lawrence's account of the Arab revolt against the dying Ottoman Empire in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1935); Tafileh, in the mountains of Edom just north of Edom's ancient capital, Bozrah, was the site of a minor battle.

For all this, Edom was still not well known, and it was the romantic picture of Edom (highly coloured by Dean Burgon's line about the rose red city half as old as time) that prevailed in people's minds. What put the history of Edom on the agenda for most biblical archaeologists and scholars was the work of the American biblical scholar and practising archaeologist William Foxwell Albright (1924) and his pupil Nelson Glueck. In 1934 Glueck began a series of 'Explorations in Eastern



Palestine' by exploring Moab; in 1935 Glueck spent some 7 weeks exploring the Wadi Arabah, the Wadi Yutm, and the Wadi Hisma region, and the central mountain range in search of ancient sites, which he classified as EB, MB, EI, Nab., Roman, Byzantine or Arab on the basis of his analysis of the pottery fragments collected from the surface at each place. He was the first to note the distinctive decorated pottery found in Transjordan and to assign it to the Iron Age, and on the basis of his work he published conclusions for the history of Transjordan in general and Edom in particular which are still influential 50 years later. Glueck argued (1935: 137-40) that (1) there had been an 'advanced' Early Bronze civilization in Edom from the 23rd-18th centuries B.C.; (2) this was followed by 'a complete gap in the history of settled communities in all Edom' between the 18th and 13th centuries B.C. (Glueck found no MB or LB pottery in Edom); (3) 'There was a highly developed Edomite civilization, which flourished especially between the 13th and 8th centuries B.C.'; to this period he attributed the decorated pottery and some of the ruined buildings, which he described as 'border fortresses'; (4) from the end of EI II in general and in many sites from about the 8th century B.C., there is another gap in the history of the settled communities in Edom, which lasted until the appearance of the Nabataeans.

So Glueck developed a picture of an Iron Age Edomite civilization - note the term: Glueck was a romantic at heart - starting in the 13th century B.C. He wanted this early starting date to suit the biblical record that after the exodus (commonly dated to the reign of Rameses II in the mid-13th century B.C.) the Israelites in the wilderness sent messengers to the king of Edom asking permission to cross Edom's territory. This story in Num. 20:14-21, interpreted at face value without any consideration of its literary origin, date, and background, was thus made the peg on which Glueck hung the findings of his surface survey. Subsequent research has shown that Glueck's overall reconstruction needs much correction: archaeological survey and excavation in Edom has shown that the major towns and villages flourished in the 8th-6th centuries B.C., Iron Age II, precisely when Glueck believed them to be in decline, and that there is little evidence for any 'highly developed civilization' in Iron Age I; and biblical research has equally demonstrated that Edom did not flourish as a kingdom until after it became independent of Judah in the mid-ninth century B.C., in the 840s; it reached the height of its 'civilization' or prosperity in the Assyrian period, and suffered decline in the Babylonian and Persian periods (Bartlett, 1972, 1973).

We need to look a little more closely at the archaeological and biblical evidence for Edom in the early centuries of the Iron Age, ca. 1200-900 B.C., Iron I. The late Crystal Bennett's pioneering excavations

of Tawilan, Buseirah and Umm el-Biyara turned up nothing for these centuries, and such archaeological evidence as we have comes from a number of surface surveys. Burton MacDonald (1980, 1982, 1983, 1984) minutely scrutinised the area between the Wadi el-Hasa and Tafileh and is now exploring the Wadi Araba; W. E. Rast and R. T. Schaub (1974), explored the plains round the SE corner of the Dead Sea; Stephen Hart (1985) surveyed about 500 sq km at the southern end of the Edom mountain range, just above Ras en Naqb; and W. J. Jobling (1981) scoured the Wadi Hisma region between Ras en Naqb and Aqaba. Whereas Glueck found no LB remains, and little that could be pinned down to Iron I, MacDonald at least found some evidence of LB and Iron I. But when one analyses his findings, not a lot. In three seasons' work (1979, 1981, 1982), MacDonald recorded 1074 sites (he defined a site as 'any place where *man* has left *evidence* of his activity', *ADAJ* 24 (1980), 169)). He found only 4 sites with certainly identifiable LB, and 12 more possibles; he found 8 which he could attribute to Iron IA (1200-1000 B.C.) and 23 in all (including the 8) attributable to Iron I (1200-900). To these we might add one site, Khirbet Khaneizir, with Iron I pottery from the plain SE of the Dead Sea, and 3 small sites from Jobling's survey south of W. Hisma. Few of these sites have been described by their surveyors in any detail, but in the uplands only 2 (MacDonald's site 10, Umm er-rih, and MacDonald's site 212, Kh. Abu Banna) seem to reach village size; the rest are much smaller, representing single buildings or just occasional sherd scatters. Large towns are conspicuous by their absence. The general impression given is that in Iron I northern Edom was populated thinly with a scatter of habitations and the very occasional village. Further south, between Tafileh and Ras en-Naqb, Hart in his survey work in 1984 and 1985 claims to have found no trace of LB or Iron Age settlement before Iron II, stating that nearly all the IA material matches the 7th-6th century B.C. material from Tawilan and Buseirah (Hart 1986). While it is true that Iron I pottery has been recorded in the Fenan region in the Wadi Araba, at mining sites in Wadi Dana, Khirbet el Ghuweib, Kh. el-Jariye, and Kh. en-Nahas (Bachmann and Hauptmann 1984), up on the Edomite plateau there is clearly little evidence of any well established Edomite population between 1200 and 900 B.C.

At first sight this evidence appears to contradict the picture given by the biblical record, which states that Edom had kings long before Israel had them (Gen. 36:31), and that one of them opposed Israel's march through the wilderness towards the promised land (Num. 20:14-21). This is not the place for a detailed analysis of those narratives, but it may be said that both narratives (Gen. 36; Num. 20) present what an Israelite writer, writing many centuries later towards the end or at the end of the monarchic period, believed ought to have been the case on the

basis of what was common knowledge about Edom. He believed that Edom had kings before Israel did because he knew the general and received tradition in Israel that in adopting kingship, Israel was copying the other nations (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5); and he compiled a suitable king-list from two other records available to him, each of which listed kings from various places with no dynastic connection; and these our author turned into a sort of dynasty, though no king on the list is the son of his predecessor, or comes from the same place. One of them is Jobab of Bozrah; but there is no evidence that Bozrah was any sort of place at all until the 9th century at the earliest. This king-list, in short, is poor evidence for Edom in the 12th-10th centuries B.C. (Bartlett, 1965; Knauf, 1985). The story of Israel's meeting opposition from a king of Edom in the 13th century B.C. is also fiction (i.e., fiction founded on fact); it is based on the fact that Edom had always been known as Israel's most hostile neighbour, and if Israel had passed through Transjordan, then of course Israel would have had trouble from Edom. The author presents Edom as Amos did in the 8th century and as others did later, as one who comes after his brother Israel with a sword. The author cannot name the Edomite king; he simply assumes Edom had a king. He knows that the road through Edom is called 'the King's highway', and if it got that name, as has been suggested, from the period of Assyrian imperial administration (the king being the King of Assyria), then the story reflects that 8th-7th century background. So this story too is poor evidence for Glueck's supposition of the existence of a powerful Edomite kingdom in the 13th century B.C. (Bartlett, 1977).

If we discount this material, the biblical picture in fact coincides well enough with the scant archaeological evidence. Edom's history really begins when David, c. 990 B.C., annexed Edom, garrisoned it, and put a governor there (2 Sam. 8:13-14). It was almost 150 years before Edom recovered sufficiently to rebel against Judah, which it did in the reign of Jehoram of Judah, in the mid-840s B.C. (2 Kings 8:20), about 10 years after Moab, its neighbour to the north, had regained its independence from the kingdom of Israel. This fits very well with the archaeological evidence for Edom's depressed economic condition in Iron Age I, and with the fact that it is not until Iron Age II that Edom's main sites develop and flourish.

Through the 8th and 7th centuries, Edom was a small vassal state in the southwest corner of the Assyrian empire, and our knowledge of her doings comes more from Assyrian records than from biblical writings. Somewhere about 800 B.C. Assyria noticed Edom, and Adadnirari III recorded at Calah (modern Nimrud) that he made the region from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, including Tyre, Sidon, Israel, Edom and Philistia, submit to his feet and pay tribute. At much the same time, Amaziah king of Judah attacked Edom, presumably wishing to



re-establish Judah's control over it; according to 2 Kings 14:7 he killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and captured Sela and called it Joktheel, 'which is its name to this day'. The Valley of Salt might be the Ghor at the south end of the Dead Sea, or perhaps the Wadi el-milh towards Beersheba; Sela might be Kh. Sela just south of Tafileh as Seetzen suggested, or Umm el-biyara in Petra, as many have supposed from its impressive size, or perhaps some place in the Negev near the Wadi el-milh (cf. Judg. 1:36). But in any case the Israelite historian does not suggest that Judah recovered Edom, which preserved its independence from Judah as a vassal state within the Assyrian empire. Amaziah, however, or his son Uzziah did establish a place called Elath on the north shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, which suggests that Judah was again looking to her trade route south via the Wadi Araba and beyond, and that Edom was no match for Uzziah's well trained army. Edom was probably just beginning to develop her own prosperity in this period; c. 760 B.C. Amos criticises Gaza for selling captives as slaves to Edom (if Edom, not Aram, Syria, is meant; the two place names are frequently and easily confused in Hebrew script); and Amos also refers to the palaces or strongholds (*'armônôt*) of Bozrah. About 734 B.C., when Judah under a new king, Ahaz, was under serious military threat from Syria and Israel, the Edomites 'recovered Elath for Edom, and drove the men of Judah from Elath; and the Edomites came to Elath, where they dwell to this day'. From now on, it seems, Edom, not Judah, could derive profit from the trade passing through the Gulf of Aqaba, and from now on Edom appears to be wealthier. Her name from now on appears on Assyrian tribute lists; it is from Tiglath-pileser III's tribute list of 734 B.C. that we first read the name of an Edomite king, Kaushmalaku, who with the kings of Ammon, Moab, Ashkelon, Judah, Gaza and others paid tribute consisting of gold, silver, tin, iron, antimony, linen-garments with multi-coloured trimmings, and native garments of dark purple wool. In 713 B.C. when Ashdod rebelled against Sargon II of Assyria, Ashdod sought support from Edom and others, but Edom may not have helped; at any rate a letter found at Nimrud seems to name her after Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab and Ammon as having paid tribute in 712 B.C. When Hezekiah of Judah rebelled a decade later, again Edom seems to have stayed out of it, and Aiarammu, King of Edom, paid up along with the kings of Sidon, Arvad, Byblos, Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. Edom, after all, did not like Judah, and it was hardly in Edom's interest to risk supporting her. A letter found at Arad (no. 40) seems to refer to diplomatic and military activity on Judah's southern border at this time; in it two soldiers from the border post of Ramath-negeb explain that they have forwarded correspondence from Edom, and end with a reference to the evil that Edom has done, though what this is is not clear. A cuneiform text probably from Esarhaddon's reign (680-669 B.C.)

lists tribute paid by 'Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Edom, in order of size of contribution; Edom pays least. More interestingly Esarhaddon records how he called up 22 kings of the west, including Qaushgabri of Edom, 'and made them transport, under terrible difficulties to Nineveh, as building material for my palace, big logs, long beams and thin boards from cedar and pine trees, products of the Sirara and Lebanon mountains ... also from their quarries in the mountains statues of protective deities' (ANET<sup>3</sup>, 291) and other stone objects. Esarhaddon's successor Assurbanipal (669-632? B.C.) involved Qaushgabri of Edom and others in his campaigns against Egypt and against Uate' of the Qedarite Arabs.

There is some evidence, both biblical and archaeological, which suggests that in this period Edomites were beginning to settle among the population of the Negeb of southern Judah, across the Wadi Araba to the west. In the OT, boundary descriptions of Judah, and references to Kadesh on the border of Edom, and the use of clan names from this region in the lists of Edomite clans in Gen. 36, all suggest that at some stage (probably in the later monarchic period) this area could be seen as Edomite. This is confirmed by the discovery of ostraca from Arad and Malhata bearing what appear to be Edomite names and reference to Edomite military activity, and by the presence of pottery at places like Tell Aroer, Tell Malhata, Horvat Qitmit, Tell Meshash, Tell 'Ira, and Horvat 'Uza which compares closely with that known from contemporary Buseirah up in the Edomite mountain range. It is clear that by the end of the 7th century B.C. there is an Edomite element in the population of southern Judah, at least south of a line west from Arad towards Beersheba. It is often suggested that they emigrated from Edom under pressure from Arab immigrants from the east, but it is more likely that the process was a slow one, extending through the Assyrian period as the Edomite population expanded. The Edomites had enough in common with the Kenites and Kenizzites and Jerahmeelites of the Judean desert and the Amalekites further south to make movement and intermarriage easy. By the end of the Assyrian empire, this region probably had a somewhat mixed population.

The fall of Assyria in 612 B.C. to Babylon and her allies and the takeover by Nabopolassar and his more famous son Nebuchadnezzar led to the collapse of more than one western independent kingdom. The fate of Judah is well known: Jerusalem was besieged and taken twice after her rebellions in 598-7 and 589-87 B.C., her rulers killed and her leading citizens deported. Edom was later blamed for helping Babylon destroy Jerusalem, but the charges against Edom clearly grow more virulent and detailed as their authors' retrospect grows longer; the 3rd/2nd century B.C. charge that the Edomites burned the Temple (1 Esd. 4:45) is ludicrous in the light of the 6th century B.C. record in 2 Kings 25:9 that the Babylonians burnt it (Bartlett, 1982). In fact, as Jer. 40:11 makes

clear, the mountains of Edom were a natural haven for Jewish refugees in 587 B.C. What happened to Edom at this time is not clear. Neither biblical nor Babylonian texts suggest that Nebuchadnezzar campaigned against Edom, though the 1st century A.D. Josephus does say that he attacked Ammon and Moab in 582 B.C. There is much to be said for the suggestion that it was the last major Babylonian ruler, Nabonidus, who brought the kingdom of Edom to an end, probably c. 553 B.C. when he marched through Edom en route for Teima in the Hejaz (Lindsay, 1976). Certainly the Edomite kingdom must have come to an end sometime in the Babylonian period; we hear no more of kings, and there is evidence of destruction at Buseirah about this time. In the book Malachi, variously dated between c. 525 and 475 B.C., the Edomites are represented as saying, 'We are shattered, but we will rebuild the ruins'; and there is evidence from Buseirah, Tawilan and Tell el Kheleifeh of human activity in these places in the Persian period. And it is to these sites, lastly, together with Umm el-biyara, that we must turn for our knowledge of the kingdom of Edom. Let us begin by reminding ourselves that individual sites depend for their *raison d'être* and success on their position. 'Why is that site where it is?' is an important question. For example, at the southern end of the Edomite plateau, Stephen Hart (1986) identified 3 large fortresses (or walled villages), 7 small fortresses, 2 probable fortresses, 2 unwallled villages, 2 hamlets and one isolated building, in an area about 12 km by 24 km, all dated by the pottery to the 7th-6th centuries B.C. Hart emphasised that this was a water deficient region, unsuitable for growing citrus, olives, grapes, wheat or barley. So why settle here? Hart put it down to Assyrian defence needs, and suggested the area was forcibly settled with an imported population, in good Assyrian style. Further north, between Tafileh and the Wadi el-Hesa, MacDonald attributed some 35 sites in all to Iron I-II, or II, over half of which appear to have been occupied for the first time in Iron II. Some are the remains of small fortresses (e.g., Rujm Karaka (211)), others domestic or agricultural. But clearly on this evidence alone Edom developed in this period, and this has much to do with political stability, improved security and the economic circumstances established by Assyrian control.

The large site of Buseirah, almost certainly biblical Bozrah, is a case in point. It has abundant water 1 km away, where fruit and vegetables can be grown or flocks watered; but its position on the crown of a hill between two deep converging wadis, overlooking the road running north-south along the mountain chain, suggests that it was not built as a market town or agricultural centre but as a command post and regional capital. The main buildings bear this out. The earlier building, B, seems to have been a palace building of the Assyrian open-court type (cf. R. Amiran and I. Dunayevsky, *BASOR* 149 (1958: 25-32), very similar to the



Lachish residency which Aharoni calls 'a distinctively Assyrian building', and probably the seat of the Assyrian governor there in the 7th century (1982: 258). Perhaps Building B was Bozrah's equivalent. From this period come some interesting objects: a seal, reading 'for Melek-leba', servant of the king', the property of a royal official; a beautifully carved *tridacna squamosa* shell, carved in the form of an eagle (one notes again the eagle at Bozrah), probably Syro-Phoenician in origin (Bennett, 1974). Eilat Mazar, in his recent analysis of pottery from this stratum of Buseirah (IV), notes that the two painted bowls (fig. 1, 2) 'reflect a decorative tradition imported through commerce from the Phoenician coast' (1985: 261). Building B was followed after a gap by Building A, above it but rather smaller. Crystal Bennett (1977: 3) attributed it to the Persian period, along with similar building remains in another area of the site, but Mazar associates it with the appearance of the painted and ornamented pottery paralleled in late 7th-early 6th century levels at Tel Malhata, Tel 'Ira, Tel Masos, and Aroer in the Beersheba region, Tel Sera' and Tel Haror on the Nahal Gerar, and at Kadesh Barnea. If Mazar is right, Building A belongs to the late Assyrian period, late 7th century B.C.; but a doubt remains, because most of the pottery illustrated by Mazar for Stratum II appears to derive from the debris dumped in antiquity over the casemates rather than from the floor or foundation trenches of Building A.

Tawilan was a very different sort of place, a village or agricultural centre rather than a city with an acropolis. It apparently began life as a claypit, and then went through two major phases of existence between the 8th and 6th centuries B.C. In the fill just above the original surface of the 'northern complex' of the 2nd of those phases, was found a Babylonian cuneiform tablet. This tablet is a contract of sale drawn up in the accession year of Darius (probably but not certainly Darius I, 521-486 B.C.); a man with an Edomite name, Qusu-sama' son of Qusu-yada', was buying sheep and oxen from Aramaean vendors, in Harran (Dalley, 1984). It is fascinating that an Edomite should be doing this, about 1,000 km from home, then taking the document back with him to Tawilan. If he could read it, possibly others in Tawilan could read cuneiform script; at all events, it is interesting that Horsfield and Conway, digging at Petra a few km away in 1930, excavated 'five stone pencils, seemingly for writing cuneiform'.

Umm el-Biyara was a small, one-period domestic site on the top of a dramatically steep-faced mountain rising sheer out of the valley of Petra. Its occupants seem to have practised weaving, and one wonders why they went up there to do it and how they organised their daily supplies. The small finds there included a badly damaged seal, which turned out to be a royal seal; the name can be restored as Qosgeber, a name appearing in the records of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, and so

giving us a *terminus post quem* for the site, which appears to be mid-7th century B.C. (Bennett, 1966). Its pottery includes some standard Edomite types, notably the cup. There is little painted pottery, which Mazar, as we have seen, dates later in the 7th century.

This brings me, lastly, to Tell el-Kheleifeh, 556 m north of the seashore of the northern coast of the Gulf of Aqaba. It was discovered by Fritz Frank in 1933, identified by him as Solomon's Ezion-geber, and excavated by Nelson Glueck in 3 seasons, 1938-40. Glueck's reports in *BASOR*, it must be said, contain more interpretation than description; sections and plans are totally absent, and Glueck's interpretation was hopelessly compromised by his obvious determination to see Tell el-Kheleifeh as Solomon's Ezion-geber and Uzziah's Elath, for which he could see no other candidate.

The problem begins with the note of 1 Kings 9:26 that 'King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom'. As far back as 1828 Léon de Laborde suggested that Ezion-geber was Jezirat Fara'un, an island 7 miles down the west coast of the Gulf from modern Eilat. Robinson and Smith (1841) rejected this in favour of a site El-Ghadyan, some 25 miles north up the Wadi Araba, believing that the sea had receded since Solomon's time. This became accepted orthodoxy, and though T. E. Lawrence showed it was nonsense in 1914 (Woolley and Lawrence, 1936), it remained a common view until Frank's proposal in 1933, which became the new orthodoxy.

Meanwhile the biblical Elath, or Elath, had been identified since Rüppell in 1822 as a group of mounds 1 km north-west of the fort of Aqaba. This remained accepted until Glueck in 1934 said he found no pottery there earlier than Nabataean. He had also failed to find Iron Age pottery at Jezirat Fara'un, and so could state that there was only one Iron Age site on the north coast of the Gulf. This caused a problem, for there were two placenames to be located; Glueck solved it by identifying Tell el-Kheleifeh both with Solomon's Ezion-geber (10th century), and Uzziah's Elath (8th century) (Glueck, 1939). Since then, however, Beno Rothenberg and others (1961) have re-examined Jezirat Fara'un and found 10th century B.C. pottery, and so have re-established Jezirat Fara'un, with its defences and anchorage, as a candidate for Ezion-geber.

This would leave Tell el-Kheleifeh as a candidate for Elath, and that would make sense, for Elath is not said to have been a port (as Ezion-geber is), and Tell el-Kheleifeh, 556 m from the sea, was not a port (though Sellin (1936) did his best by arguing for a channel to it from the gulf). But Glueck had argued strongly that Tell el-Kheleifeh pre-dated Uzziah and had at least 5 periods of occupation: I, under Solomon; II, under Jehoshaphat (9th century); III, as the Elath Uzziah

built (8th century); IV, as the Edomite town from c. 734 B.C. to the end of the 6th century B.C.; and Period V, into the 5th and 4th centuries. But in excavating Tell el-Kheleifeh, Glueck rejected (1940: 4) what he called 'a straight stratigraphic method' on the grounds that it would not have worked at Tell el-Kheleifeh because walls of different periods were built against one another. So we have no useful sections or stratigraphy to go on. Glueck himself was the first victim of this, and he had great difficulty relating the major inner and outer walls of the site to one another. And this is what we must examine. What we ultimately want to know is, when Tell el-Kheleifeh was founded.

In his first season, Glueck excavated a major building (which he interpreted as a copper refinery) surrounded by an outer wall with offsets and rooms inside. Glueck thought they were foundry rooms, but Albright (1956: 136) soon pointed out they were casemates. In his second season, 1939, Glueck found that this wall was part of the inner complex of the site; outside it he found the east, south, and west sides of a solid outer wall with a four-chambered gate in the south wall. He believed all this Solomonic, but in his third season he found that this outer wall (in fact, a double-walled fortification, the solid wall having what the Greeks called a *proteichisma* in front) 'in places cuts through, and in other places is built over part of the rooms of the industrial square' (i.e., the inner casemate complex) 'and the north side of the refinery'. This forced Glueck to redate the solid wall to a rebuilding by Jehoshaphat in the 9th century. (Note how Glueck's interpretation of the site is determined by his belief that it was Ezion-geber, and his interpretation of the biblical evidence for Ezion-geber and Elath.) Now the site could be seen to have two basic overlapping construction phases: (1) the main building with surrounding casemate wall; and (2) a new larger site, fortified with a solid offset/inset wall and a four-chambered gate (which Glueck saw as having several phases, probably correctly).

In an important article published in 1985, G. Pratico demonstrated that all the pottery hitherto published by Glueck from Tell el-Kheleifeh (apart from the 'Negebite' ware, which is known from all periods of the Iron Age and so does not help much) belonged to the 8th-6th centuries B.C., with parallels at Buseirah and Umm el-biyarah. He also noted that the inner casemate fortress of Tell el-Kheleifeh was 'similar in architectural plan to the central Negev fortress tradition', resembling especially the square fortresses of Nahal Reviv, Horvat Ritma, Horvat Mesora and a small fortress near 'Atar Haro'a. R. Cohen had dated these, on the basis of wheelmade pottery forms, to the tenth century B.C. (1980: 61-79). More recently, Cohen has redated these square Negev fortresses to the Persian period (1986: 40-45) i.e., to the 5th-4th centuries B.C. The problem with dating the casemate fortress at Tell el-Kheleifeh by comparison with 10th century B.C. or 5th-4th century B.C. fortresses



in the Negev is that the published pottery apparently to be associated with Tell el-Kheleifeh's casemate fortress belongs to the Assyrian-Iron II, 8th-6th centuries B.C. period - though there is also some 'Negev' ware which might come from anywhere in Iron I or II, and some imported 5th-4th centuries B.C. Greek pottery on the surface of the tell and immediately below the surface.

Glueck dated the casemate wall to the 10th century B.C., partly on the strength of the 'Negevite' pottery and partly because he wished to associate the site with Solomon's Ezion-geber; he then dated the solid wall to the mid-ninth century, Jehoshaphat's reign. Aharoni similarly appears to date the casemate wall to the 10th and the solid wall to the 9th centuries B.C., partly on the analogy of a similar sequence of building at Arad, and partly because the four-chambered, or bi-partite, gate at Tell el-Kheleifeh compares closely with similar gates at 9th century Megiddo (IIIB), Beersheba (Str.III), Mizpah (T. en-Nasbeh), and perhaps Arad. However, the four-chambered gate seems to have been in use from the 10th century B.C. to the sixth, and there is no reason why such a gate should not have been built in the 8th or 7th century B.C. The major constructions at Tell el-Kheleifeh cannot be dated precisely enough by these architectural comparisons. The published pottery seems to limit us to the 8th-6th centuries B.C., and unless there is a lot of unpublished 10th-9th century B.C. pottery from Tell el-Kheleifeh (which neither Glueck nor Pratico suggest), it seems safest to suppose that both the casemate fortress and the solid offsets/insets walled settlement fall within the 8th-6th centuries. Pratico compares the situation at Kadesh-Barnea (T. el-Qudeirat) where in the 8th-7th century B.C. a solid-walled rectangular fortress replaced an earlier casemate one.

Aharoni noted (1982: 249) that 'one has seen from air photographs it is most difficult to determine which of the two walls is chronologically earlier'; by analogy with Arad, he thinks the casemate wall earlier. Glueck in his reports is emphatic that the casemate wall is the earlier, and that the solid wall was found cutting through the casemate wall at one point and built over it at another, and that it was built partly over the north side of the main, central building (Glueck's 'smelter'). If we accept the 8th-6th century pottery horizons, then we might tentatively identify Tell el-Kheleifeh with Elath (at least it fits topographically and chronologically), and see the casemate fortress as the work of Amaziah or Uzziah, and the expanded settlement with the solid wall as the work of the Edomites after c. 735 B.C., in the later Assyrian period. The evidence of a few later buildings above this settlement (Glueck's Period V), together with the imported Greek pottery and Aramaic and Phoenician ostraca found in the surface strata of the tell indicate a 5th-4th century B.C. occupation of the site, though on a fairly small scale. What happened thereafter, we hardly know. The name Elath

survived in the Greek and Roman form Aila, which perhaps belonged to the collection of mounds 1 km northwest of Aqaba, where Glueck found evidence of pottery from Nabataean times onward. What is needed now is an excavation of these mounds, and an excavation of the northern sector of the casemates at Tell el-Kheleifeh, preserved beneath the dumps of Glueck's excavations.

Tell el-Kheleifeh remains something of a mystery, because its stratification was not properly recorded. Confusion has been added to mystery because Nelson Glueck and others were too anxious to identify it with Solomon's Ezion-geber. I think it simpler to limit the identification to Elath, founded by Amaziah or Uzziah and taken over by the Edomites. Subsequent excavation may show even this to be a biblical scholar's wishful thinking; but at least an 8th-6th century B.C. Tell el-Kheleifeh fits in with our other archaeological evidence for the kingdom of Edom.

I must end by paying two important tributes. First, I do not wish to belittle Glueck's achievements in exploration and in excavation in Jordan; they opened the door to many who came after him, and we all owe him much. He was both a practising archaeologist and a biblical scholar, in the days when to combine both disciplines was still respectable. In these latter years, when biblical scholar and dirt archaeologist, usually failing to understand one another, have hardly been on speaking terms, it is no harm to remind ourselves that the two disciplines need to stand in a working relationship. And lastly, I would like to offer this paper as a small tribute to Professor Weingreen, whose interests are archaeological as well as linguistic, and whose encouragement and friendship I have greatly valued over more than twenty years.

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